# PILGRIMAGES TO OLD HOMES

MOSTLY ON THE WELSH BORDER

BY

FLETCHER MOSS

THE OLD PARSONAGE

DIDSBURY

U301. 188

TRANSFERRED TO
Metropolitan Special Collections
LEWISHAM.

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM
LIBRARY SERVICE

Author

Title

BOOK STORE

Books or discs must be returned on or before the last date stamped on label or on card in book pocket. Books or discs can be renewed by telephone, letter or personal call unless required by another reader. After library hours use the Ansafone Service (01-698 7347). For hours of opening and charges see notices at the above branch, but note that all lending departments close at 1 pm on Wednesday and all libraries are closed on Sundays, Good Friday, Christmas Day, Bank Holidays and Saturdays prior to Bank Holidays.

METROPOLITAN
SPECIAL COLLECTION

THE VALE OF THE CROSS

942·43/M5

# PILGRIMAGES TO OLD HOMES

## MOSTLY ON THE WELSH BORDER

By

FLETCHER MOSS

Author of Three Local Histories:
Also "Folk-Lore, Old Customs, and Tales,"
"Pilgrimages in Cheshire and Shropshire."
Member of the Councils of Manchester and Withington.

WITH 242 ILLUSTRATIONS

"*All houses wherein men have lived and died are haunted.*"

Published by the Author from his home
*The Old Parsonage, Didsbury*
April 1903

*All rights reserved*

914.245.

*"GOD SAVE YOU, PILGRIM!*
*Whither are you bound?"*

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL.

Printed by BALLANTYNE, HANSON & Co
At the Ballantyne Press

TRANSFERRED TO
Metropolitan Special Collections
LEWISHAM.

# Preface

IT is exactly two years since I wrote the last words of my last book, and the consequences of writing and publishing that book have led to this one, and greatly influenced my life for the time. It may be that a short account of the reception by the public and the press of "Pilgrimages in Cheshire and Shropshire" is the best preface to a wider continuation of the work.

Acting under the advice of our city librarian, that the book might be noticed further afield than Manchester, I sent copies for review to the three chief literary papers—the *Times*, the *Athenæum*, and the *Spectator*. The *Times* inserted a few lines, their only complaint being about the weight of the book—as if it had been sold by the pound. The *Spectator* gave it the first place in their articles on books, and after a little preliminary castigation there was a highly appreciative review, evidently written by a man who knew what he was writing about. It came to me, with some orders for books, on a Sunday morning, and I was so interested in it that I read it through carefully three times, and then went to church to think about it during the sermon.

Long before that half-hour's porridge of words was over I had determined to take to heart the lesson of the *Spectator*—to make good my spare time or times of ease by seeing more of our old English homes; to go on pilgrimage more to the home than to the church or the battlefield; to put on record with pen and picture more of those lovely old houses, that are still left in the land of my fathers, slowly perishing by time, unknown

to the world, and lucky to be unknown, or their beauty and their charm would soon be gone.

The writer in the *Spectator* hoped that the sentiment for which "the proud Emathian conqueror bid spare the house of Pindarus" would spare the historic houses of England; and if he reads this book he will have records of English homes that are literally spared for sentiment. The "inapposite jocularity" that he complained of is being cured by the sadness of age and bereavement, but in seeing and writing of these pleasant scenes there is comfort and joy.

The review in the *Athenæum* appeared under the heading of works on Architecture, though I had never pretended to know anything whatever of architecture, no more than I did of the Differential and Integral Calculus, for I was once supposed to have learnt something of the latter, but never anything of the former. As for "mastering the elements" of all the 'ologies that this schoolmaster or very superior critic wished me to "master," I had written that "life is far too short to see the beauties of this English land" and earn one's daily bread, therefore I leave the writing of Dryasdust to learned pedagogues. Even they should not make inaccurate statements as to what has been written. One complaint was that a picture was spoilt by the "two big, ugly modern heads" of two choir boys. It seemed so ridiculous that any bilious critic should find fault with poor lads for having heads that were "big" and "ugly" and "modern," that at last I laughed aloud.

By the time the *Athenæum's* review was published and the pages of the paper cut, the whole edition of the book was sold, and in a few weeks copies of the book were selling at three times the original price. The article in the *Spectator* brought the demand. Within a few days of its appearance there came orders from Berlin and Alexandria, and when the American inquiries came there were few copies left. This success had its

drawbacks, for it is rather a nuisance to be constantly writing letters of regret, and returning money even to New Zealand and America.

An unknown artist sent a design for a stained-glass window or memorial. In his prophetic vision he had been solely inspired by the sad picture of a vagabond in the stocks, and in fancy saw that poor vagabond reformed and clothed in the garb of goodness. It may be noticed that the book of devotions is Ormerod's "History of Cheshire." The pot of jam refers to the currant jam at Stokesay. There are the necessary apples, and the space for the adjective before the "parson" is blank.

For a short notice of this book I will only say that my partner in all these pilgrimages, and in many unrecorded others, has been X. He has taken every photograph, developed and printed them all himself, excepting the snapshots of animals, which have been my work. In two years there has only been one plate broken, a picture of hops that were ripe for the hopping, and another spoilt, the one mentioned on page 333.

It had been my intention to visit only English homes, but we were lured across the borderland of Wales to the romantic gorge of The World's End. Then Llanthony Abbey, Montgomery Castle, Powysland, tempted us. The ruins and the legends of the borderland fascinated us until the name of English homes had to be abandoned, and this book entitled "Pilgrimages to Old Homes," with or without the addition of "Mostly on the Welsh Border."

FLETCHER MOSS.

THE OLD PARSONAGE,
DIDSBURY.
*February* 2, 1903.

THE OLD PARSONAGE, DIDSBURY

# Contents


| | PAGE |
|---|---|
| ALDERLEY | 1 |
| MUCKLESTONE WOOD | 17 |
| MESS, MEES, OR MEECE, HALL—SWYNNERTON | 32 |
| DERBYSHIRE | 44 |
| DICK WHITTINGTON'S PROBABLE BIRTHPLACE | 54 |
| JACK MYTTON'S HALSTON | 62 |
| THE WORLD'S END | 70 |
| ALBRIGHT HUSSEY—PRESTON GUBBALS—MYDDLE—MORETON CORBET | 89 |
| THE HOME OF THE HEREFORDS | 104 |
| CLIFFORD CASTLE—ABBEY DORE—KILPECK | 126 |
| LEDBURY—MUCH MARCLE | 137 |
| HEREFORD | 143 |
| LUDFORD HALL — RICHARDS CASTLE — ORLETON COURT (A.D. 1902) | 152 |
| LEMSTER—EARDISLAND—BOSBURY—DORMINGTON | 163 |
| LLANTHONY ABBEY—GROSMONT—GARWAY | 177 |
| TINTERN ABBEY—GOODRICH CASTLE | 189 |
| LITTLE MORETON HALL | 201 |
| DIEULACRES ABBEY | 221 |
| MONTGOMERY CASTLE—MARRINGTON HALL | 234 |
| LYMORE—CHIRBURY | 247 |

PAGE

POWYSLAND (The Paradise of the Cymry) . . . . 258

MORE ABOUT POWYSLAND . . . . . 274

ARLEY HALL . . . . . 287

CAUS CASTLE—MARCHE MANOR—OLD PARR . . . 301

PITCHFORD HALL . . . . . 311

TREAGO CASTLE—WYTHALL . . . . . 325

MANCHESTER . . . . . 339

SHIPTON HALL . . . . . 356

NORBURY IN DERBYSHIRE . . . . . 365

CARDEN . . . . . 372

BARLOW HALL . . . . . 378

ABNEY HALL . . . . . 389

---

INDEX . . . . . 401

# List of Illustrations


THE VALE OF THE CROSS . . . . . *Frontispiece*

PAGE

ALDERLEY . . . . . 3

„ HALL . . . . . 4

„ „ . . . . . 5

„ THE EDGE OF THE EDGE . . . . 7

„ THE CLOCK HOUSE . . . . . 9

„ THE MILL . . . . . 11

„ FARMHOUSE, FORMERLY THE EAGLE AND CHILD INN . . . . . 12

„ THE LANE TO THE CHURCH . . . . 14

„ CHURCH . . . . . 15

„ SCHOOLHOUSE . . . . . 16

MOSS HALL . . . . . 17

AUDLEM CHURCH . . . . . 18

MOSS HALL . . . . . 19

GAME-FOWL . . . . . 20

MUCKLESTONE WOOD . . . . . 22

THE OLD PARSONAGE, ASHLEY . . . . . 25

BUTTERCUP, BLOSSOM, BEAUTY . . . . . 26

BROUGHTON HALL . . . . . 27

„ CHURCH . . . . . 29

„ HALL . . . . . 30

„ CHURCH . . . . . 31

THE DESOLATE HOME OF MY FATHERS . . . 33

MEES HALL . . . . . 35

„ „ . . . . . 37

PAGE

RANTON ABBEY . . . . . 38
WOLF'S HEAD DOORWAY, SWYNNERTON . . . . 41
SWYNNERTON OF SWYNNERTON . . . . . 42
A LONG-BURIED STATUE OF CHRIST . . . . 43
HARTINGTON CHURCH . . . . . 45
„ HALL . . . . . 46
GATEWAY, TISSINGTON HALL . . . . . 47
TISSINGTON WELL . . . . . 49
TISSINGTON . . . . . 51
THE BLUE PIG . . . . . 53
WHITTINGTON CASTLE . . . . . 57
„ „ . . . . . 59
WHITTINGTON . . . . . 61
THE HOME OF JACK MYTTON . . . . . 65
THE GRAVE OF JACK MYTTON . . . . . 67
JACK MYTTON STOPPING THE DOCTOR AND THE PARSON . . . . . 69
PLAS UCHAF EGLWYSEG . . . . . 75
„ „ . . . . . 77
„ „ . . . . . 79
„ „ . . . . . 80
„ „ . . . . . 81
VALLE CRUCIS ABBEY . . . . . 85
„ „ . . . . . 87
CANADIAN GANDER . . . . . 88
GATEWAY TO ALBRIGHT HUSSEY . . . . . 91
ALBRIGHT HUSSEY . . . . . 93
„ „ . . . . . 95
MYDDLE CASTLE . . . . . 97
MORETON CORBET . . . . . 101
MORETON CORBET . . . . . 102
SKELETON IN ARMOUR . . . . . 103
LUDLOW CASTLE . . . . . 105
„ „ . . . . . 107

PAGE

WHERE THE BULL DRINKS . . . . . 109
A HEREFORD BULL . . . . . 110
A CHAMPION HERD . . . . . 111
THE WAY INTO WEOBLEY . . . . . 113
WEOBLEY . . . . . 115
„ . . . . . 117
„ —THE TOMKINS' HOUSE . . . . . 119
THE LEY . . . . . 121
„ . . . . . 123
„ . . . . . 124
ANCIENT FURNITURE . . . . . 125
CLIFFORD CASTLE ON THE WYE . . . . . 127
„ „ „ . . . . . 129
RHYD SPENCE INN . . . . . 131
SUN-DIAL, DORSTONE . . . . . 132
ABBEY DORE . . . . . 133
KILPECK . . . . . 135
LEDBURY . . . . . 138
„ MARKET-HALL . . . . . 139
PRESTON COURT . . . . . 141
„ „ . . . . . 142
HEREFORD . . . . . 145
OPEN-AIR PULPIT . . . . . 146
THE RED-COAT HOSPITAL . . . . . 147
HEREFORDS . . . . . 151
LUDLOW CASTLE—THE BANQUETING HALL . . . 153
„ „ THE ROUND CHURCH . . . 154
„ —THE READER'S HOUSE . . . . . 155
LUDFORD HALL . . . . . 157
ORLETON COURT . . . . . 159
„ „ . . . . . 161
GREY-LAG GANDER WITH COMMON GOOSE AND YOUNG . . . . . 162
THE RED-COAT HOSPITAL . . . . . 165

PAGE

LEMSTER GRANGE . . . . . 167
EARDISLAND . . . . . 168
„ . . . . . 169
„ THE STAICK HOUSE. . . . . 170
„ „ „ . . . . . 171
BOSBURY CHURCH . . . . . 173
GAME-FOWL . . . . . 174
„ „ . . . . . 175
TOSSPOT ASKING WHAT THERE IS FOR SUPPER . 176
ALLTYRYNYS . . . . . 178
LLANTHONY ABBEY AND INN . . . . . 179
„ „ . . . . . 181
„ „ . . . . . 183
LLANVIHANGEL-CRUCARNEY COURT . . . . . 185
GARWAY . . . . . 186
„ CHANCEL ARCH . . . . . 187
TINTERN ABBEY . . . . . 188
„ „ (WEST WINDOW) . . . . . 190
MONMOUTH GATEHOUSE . . . . . 191
GOODRICH CASTLE . . . . . 194
„ „ . . . . . 195
„ „ . . . . . 197
„ „ NORMAN KEEP . . . . . 198
WYTHALL FARM . . . . . 199
REEDSMERE . . . . . 201
SIDDINGTON CROSS . . . . . 202
SIDDINGTON CHURCH . . . . . 203
ASTBURY CHURCH . . . . . 204
MORETON OLD HALL . . . . . 205
„ „ THE GATEHOUSE . . . . 207
„ „ THE MOAT . . . . . 208
„ „ THE STATELY CENTRE . . 209
„ „ A WINDOW OF WITHDRAWING-ROOM . . . . . 211

PAGE

MORETON OLD HALL, THE GATEHOUSE FROM THE COURTYARD . . . . 213
" " CIRCULAR STAIRS . . . . 214
" " THE PORCH . . . . . 215
" " SMALL ROOM OVER ENTRANCE 216
" " THE BALLROOM . . . . 217
" " THE MOUND . . . . . 218
" " FROM THE SOUTH-WEST . . 219
FINE OLD CHEST . . . . . 220
DIEULACRES ABBEY . . . . . 222
" " . . . . . 223
" " . . . . . 225
" " . . . . . 227
"TO WHAT BASE USES WE MAY COME" . . . . 228
SALTERSLEY . . . . . 229
TABLE AND SCREEN AT SALTERSLEY . . . . 231
LINDOW MOSS . . . . . 232
ONE OF MY ANCESTRAL HOMES . . . . . 233
MONTGOMERY CASTLE . . . . . 235
" " VIEW FROM . . . . . 237
MARRINGTON HALL . . . . . 240
" " . . . . . 241
SUN-DIAL AT MARRINGTON HALL . . . . . 243
A TOBY JUG . . . . . 246
LYMORE . . . . . 249
" FIRST FLOOR OF GRAND STAIRCASE . . 251
" THE SCULLERY . . . . . 252
" A BEDROOM . . . . . 253
" APPROACH TO STATE BEDROOMS . . . 255
HEREFORDS . . . . . 257
RHYD-Y-CARW . . . . . 260
" . . . . . 261
TALGARTH . . . . . 263
STAIRCASE OF SOLID OAK AT PARK . . . . . 266

PAGE

A MORE MODERN STAIRCASE CUT FROM SOLID OAK, ABNEY HALL . . . . . 267
MAESMAWR . . . . . 269
„ . . . . . 270
PENARTH . . . . . 271
„ . . . . . 272
OLD CRADLE . . . . . 273
LLWYN . . . . . 275
„ . . . . . 276
PORCH OF PENRHOS HALL . . . . . 277
PENRHOS HALL . . . . . 279
TREDERWEN . . . . . 281
TREWERN HALL . . . . . 283
„ „ . . . . . 284
„ „ THE KITCHEN . . . . . 285
WARBURTON OLD CHURCH . . . . . 288
„ „ „ . . . . . 289
ARLEY HALL . . . . . 291
„ GREEN . . . . . 293
„ MILL . . . . . 294
„ SCHOOL . . . . . 295
„ GATEHOUSE TO STABLE-YARD . . . . 297
„ THE ANCIENT BARN . . . . . 299
„ CLIPT YEWS . . . . . 300
MINSTERLEY HALL . . . . . 303
MARCHE MANOR . . . . . 307
CHAIR AND HELMET . . . . . 308
HYDE HALL, DENTON . . . . . 309
SIR JOHN DE PICHFORD . . . . . 310
PITCHFORD HALL, THE (PRESENT) FRONT DOOR . 312
„ „ THE REMNANT OF THE MOAT . 313
„ „ THE FORMER FRONT . . . 315
„ „ SIR FRANCIS OTTLEY AND FAMILY 317
„ „ SUMMER HOUSE IN TREE . . 319

PAGE

PITCHFORD HALL, FROM BY THE HOUSE IN THE TREE 320
„ CHURCH . . . . . 321
FONT AT CONDOVER . . . . . 323
MODERN MOWING . . . . . 324
TREAGO CASTLE . . . . . 326
„ „ . . . . . 327
„ „ . . . . . 329
„ „ . . . . . 331
WYTHALL . . . . . 334
„ . . . . . 335
„ FRONT DOOR . . . . . 336
„ BACK . . . . . 337
A CHEST OF THE DAVENPORTS . . . . . 338
MANCHESTER'S OLD HALL, THE CLOISTERS . . . 341
„ „ „ PASSAGE BY THE HALL 343
„ „ „ THE DINING-HALL . . 345
„ „ „ THE READING-ROOM OF THE LIBRARY . . 347
„ „ „ THE GATEHOUSE . . 349
„ „ „ THE CHRONICLE OF MATTHEW PARIS . 351
AT ABNEY HALL . . . . . 353
THE BRERETON ARMS, BRERETON . . . . 354
„ „ „ . . . . . 355
SHIPTON HALL . . . . . 357
„ „ . . . . . 359
„ „ DOVECOT . . . . . 360
„ „ SPANISH CHESTNUT . . . . . 361
A BIT OF OLD MANCHESTER . . . . . 364
FENNY BENTLEY . . . . . 366
NORBURY CHURCH . . . . . 367
„ „ THE TOMB OF SIR NICHOLAS FITZHERBERT, TENTH LORD OF NORBURY . . . . . 369
NORBURY HALL . . . . . 371

PAGE

CARDEN . . . . . 373

„ . . . . . 375

COCK INN, BARNTON . . . . . 377

BARLOW HALL, THE NEWER END . . . . . 379

„ „ COURTYARD . . . . . 381

„ „ . . . . . 383

„ „ . . . . . 385

AN OLD DIDSBURY CHAIR . . . . . 388

ABNEY HALL . . . . . 390

„ „ DINING-ROOM . . . . . 392

„ „ TERRACE ROOM . . . . . 393

„ „ RELICS OF THE GREAT FAMILIES OF SMITH AND BROWN . . . . 395

„ „ CROMWELL AND MILTON . . . . 397

„ „ ANCIENT BEDSTEAD . . . . . 398

BUCKLEY HALL, A RESTORED REMNANT . . . 399

# PILGRIMAGES TO OLD HOMES

## ALDERLEY

ALDERLEY is a place well known by name to the millions round Manchester, for crowds go for a summer-day's holiday to the new town by the station, where they eat and drink and idle, and say they have seen it all, though they have never been to the sweet seclusion of the time-honoured, aristocratic Alderley, and have never seen it.

When the main line of railway from Manchester to London was made, the station for the district was placed where the line crossed the great south road from Manchester, and its name was taken from the neighbouring steep hill, well known as Alderley Edge, the sharp edge or ridge of Over Alderley, but the station, and the town that has since sprung up all round it, was in the township of Chorley and the parish of Wilmslow. The new houses were mostly built on lands bought from the Traffords, who were lords of the manor of Chorley and Pownall Fee; but the Stanleys, lords of Alderley, would not sell their lands, and when the second lord became Postmaster-General about forty years since he objected to his name Alderley being appropriated by others, and soon showed his authority and power by sending all letters directed to residents

in the new Alderley to the dead-letter office or re-directed to Chorley. I can well remember the commotion that was caused in the district by the new postal regulations, and now that the tide he vainly tried to stem has overwhelmed the country round, you may still read on the tomb of the Postmaster-General, where he lies in resplendent effigy arrayed in his peer's robes, that he was "ever distinguished by clearness of judgment and by uncompromising public spirit."

Let us hurry through the modern town and make for the old, where building is not allowed and all things linger on in calm decay. The remnants of the hall are most interesting, for there the waters of the moat still wash the sides of the house; and though in our neighbourhood moats are not uncommon, they are generally dry, or the house stands on an island in the middle. The moated hall of Chorley (a picture of which is in my last book) is a finer and older house than that of its neighbour at Alderley, but it lacks the charm of the water rippling round the walls. I can fancy how my readers who are soaked in sanitary science will shudder at this, and say, "Dear me, how dreadfully damp! I should send for the drain inspector and the doctor at once;" and the medical officer of health would say, "The place is quite unfit for human habitation"—indifferent and superior to the fact that one family lived in it for centuries.

The first mention of the hall is, that about 1580 Dorothy Stanley, "who liveth sole," built or rebuilt a house, which Sir Thomas Stanley greatly enlarged about 1630, and which Sir Edward Stanley added to in 1754. But in March 1779, nearly all was burnt, and it has never been rebuilt. A noted portrait, by Gainsborough, of the first lord's father, was too big for removal, and perished with other treasures. The spacious courtyard where the village forces mustered in the times of danger, and the central hall where harvest home

ALDERLEY

was feasted, when the oldest servant Peter danced the Cheshire round with Charlotte Allcock on the high table, are all gone. For above a hundred years potatoes and onions have flourished on part of the site of this old home. The ancient mounting-block still stands by the bridge, though pillions are no more, and ornamental pillars of stone are picturesquely awry after three

ALDERLEY HALL

centuries of storms. Even since these words were written and photographs taken, another stone column has fallen with the weight of years and ivy. What a wonderful thing it is that so near to our bustling, restless city of Manchester, there is to-day a house where you might take a plunge from your bedroom window and paddle about for your morning bath among the ducks and fishes; or fish from your window for your breakfast as you are dressing; or listen as you lie in bed to the lap, lap, lapping of the water on the walls, or the gentle rustle of the ripples in the reeds, while you

ALDERLEY HALL

lazily dream of the days of love and long ago, or vainly sigh

> "For the touch of a vanished hand,
> And the sound of a voice that is still"

As I went in search of the best sites for photographing, I noticed on the farther side of the small mere which the moat widens into, a pair of Canadian geese, which disappeared at my approach. This puzzled me, for they could not have flown away or dived without my noticing them, but they knew of a small water-course with banks that would hide them, and up that they were hurrying away. Even the birds have changed in the last century, for Canadian geese are of modern importation; and the long-winged, fork-tailed kites were common birds here, as formerly they were the scavengers of London streets, and now there is not a solitary wild kite left alive in England. In a letter of the first Lord Stanley, he states: "Here was I returned to the same spot where life had begun. Across this mere is a venerable wood of beech trees above 140 years old, planted by one of our great-grandfathers on his marriage. The oaks, alas! are gone. The silence only broken by the screams of the large kites which constantly build their nests here, and the calls of the teal and the wild ducks in the mere." The kites are all gone, and probably the teal also, but some of the oaks and many of their successors are left.

The beech trees were grown from beechmast brought from Kyre, in Worcestershire, whence the Sir Thomas Stanley of that day had brought his wife. The date would probably be from about 1630 to 1650. A great-grandson of the above planted firs on the Edge about 1750, and in 1797 Sir John Thomas Stanley, the first lord, wants "hundreds of bushels of seeds of forest trees for the further decoration of Alderley." The love of trees, and the care of the estates, seem to have been a family inheritance which survived their many changes of religion and politics, for the planter of the beech trees

THE EDGE OF THE EDGE, ALDERLEY

was Catholic, while the planter of the firs was Protestant and a lawyer. A violent storm in January 1802 uprooted many of the beech. Few if any of the firs at the present day look to me to be the age here given, but perhaps they only grow very slowly up there. Their brilliantly-coloured trunks and weather-torn branches are wonderfully picturesque, with the rich carpeting of bracken and the glorious views of miles and miles of Cheshire for a background. The whole estate is particularly well timbered, there being splendid trees of many sorts, though I remember something not many years ago about the Court of Chancery and the cutting down of some of these trees. An old country proverb used to tell us, "If you have nothing to do, plant a tree; it will be growing while you are sleeping." Yes, it may be growing for centuries of our long sleep, but will any one ever seek to know who planted it, or why he planted it? Some one may, but most of those who deign to notice them will merely say the trees grow because they ought to: who cares!

On the very top of the Edge are the inevitable marks of the man with the muck-rake, marks of the successive generations who have digged, and delved, and scratched to get metal where their forefathers were not very long ago proud to have hammers of stone. The forgotten prehistoric implements are sometimes found, but fortunately the rich country around is still pastoral—in poetic language, "a land with milk and honey flowing." Many and varied are the legends of subterranean treasures hidden in the rock, and not only treasures of untold gold, but of armies of sleeping men, knights clad in glistening armour from helm to heel, ready for the great slaughter when the trumpet of the wizard summons them to the battle. Whether they are to rise again out of their turn, or sleep on like the rest of common folk, and who is to get the money, need not trouble us to-day; there is plenty to see above-ground in Alderley.

CLOCK HOUSE, ALDERLEY EDGE

There are many picturesque old houses on the estate of various dates and sizes, unusually well kept and preserved. Indeed the whole place is well looked after. Soss Moss Hall is shown in my last book. Another very old place, known as the Clock House, is a curiosity. The late Mr. Thomas Letherbrow was fond of drawing or painting it, and gave me elaborate directions about finding it, but with all my experience of finding secluded spots, this was almost unapproachable, for there is literally no road whatever to it. The house is very old, of crooked split oaks resting on big stones and curving over to the ridge of the roof, with a weather-worn porch and friendly yew. On the gable a rough old clock-face is painted; hence its name, but there is no date. It lies a little below the crest of the Edge on the north-east side. After finding the gateway from the country lane, any one wishing to get to the house has to go along a cart-road in the field, until that cart-road becomes a mere track and then loses itself altogether, gets mixed up in the grass, and the traveller must walk or wander by faith, for across one or two fields there is not a vestige of a path. We got there at last, however, with bicycles and camera, finding a noteworthy old house with plenty of pigs and children.

From the Wizard on the Edge down to the Cross below, there winds a lane through open forest of bracken and firs, beech and birch. Every glade is beautiful, and everything is delightfully picturesque—the rocks, the trees, the cottages, and thatch. Well has it earned its name of Artist's Lane. The cross is embraced and smothered with a thorn tree that is probably the Glastonbury Thorn of the Stanley memoirs, a successor to the staff of Joseph of Arimathea, a slip from the famous tree that blossomed at the Nativity. The quaint and curious mill is seen even by the scorching cyclist. The lofty firs that stood around it in my memory are gone, and the rambling timbered house opposite is an inn no more. The crowds were too rough, and the swinging

THE MILL, ALDERLEY

FARMHOUSE, FORMERLY THE EAGLE AND CHILD INN, ALDERLEY

sign with the eagle and child, or "the brid an babby," no longer swings its welcome over the road.

The church is a noble building, with many nooks and corners of varied height and architecture. The pew or chapel of the lord has a stairway of stone from the outside, but no means of access from the inside of the church, where it is raised aloft above the common folk, embellished with elaborate carving and highly decorated ceiling. On the other or north side of the nave is a curious dormer window, with part of the roof raised, as if at some time there might have been a similar pew for the feudal retainers of the lord. Gorgeous shields of arms of the family alliances of the Stanleys hang around the organ loft or front of gallery, or wherever they can be shown; even the tiles of the flooring are emblazoned with their arms and motto. Rather too much of

"The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power."

Their proud motto "Sans changer" [without change] seems rather foolish here where lord and serf are mingling in the common dust. Has no change come to these proud lords? Is there no rot here? All things change, and the able and gifted family with the essentially English name of Stanley, have changed as often or oftener than most, ever since their great wealth and power were gotten by the sudden change of sides on Bosworth Field.

KING RICHARD. What says Lord Stanley? Will he bring his power?
MESSENGER. My lord, he doth deny to come.
KING. Off instantly with his son George's head!

*Richard III.*, Act v. Scene 3.

Under an ancient yew in the churchyard are the homely graves of Catherine and Mary Stanley, the mother and the sister of Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, the well-known Dean of Westminster. Beside them is an Early English font that was long buried, but is now

LANE TO CHURCH, ALDERLEY

ALDERLEY CHURCH

copied and treasured. The adjoining schoolhouse, with its mouldering stone, its 1628 inscription, its mullioned windows and ivy-clad gables, is very picturesque. Beside it is an old apple tree with real apples on it, and others in the churchyard grass below. I trod on one without hurting it, so the lads had doubtless tried them before. The rambling rectory with its large garden looks to be all that man could wish for. Around us are the open fields with giant oaks. "The lowing herds wind slowly o'er the lea," the rabbits frisk in the grass, the wild-ducks and water-hens are tame. In the quiet of the autumn evening all things seem steeped in peace and calm decay, when the trippers cease from troubling, and the children are at rest.

SCHOOLHOUSE, ALDERLEY

# MUCKLESTONE WOOD

THE very name of Mucklestone Wood is suggestive of big stones and woods, but it gives no idea of the wondrous vision that from its seven hundred feet of height is spread out as on an open map of scores of miles of this fair realm of England. Here the good soil and all that it enriches brought the earliest primeval man to settle and multiply. All down the long ages he and his stuck to the land, fattened on it, fought for it, died on it, and turned to it again. Aborigine, Briton, Roman, Anglo-Saxon, Norman, all have left their mark, and many a stately home and some forlorn and desolate may still from there be seen. My childhood had been nourished on its healthy air, my youthful dreams were tinged with its romantic memories and with its gorgeous sunsets. X had often heard from me of this delectable land. He had been shown it from afar, but now he was to view it, a land compared to which the famous Promised Land was but a barren wilderness.

MOSS HALL

We went by the usual train to Crewe, and from thence to Audlem, to photograph the many-gabled black and white house known as Moss Hall. The date that is now over the door is 1016, but the second figure has probably been a six, and the person who altered it de-

served kicking. In the Civil War time a Captain Massy (not Mossy) lived here, and was plundered of sixty cattle with goods and horses all at once. How he would swear! Church and King men to this day are great in oaths, and some of them would not be within adding a few centuries to the date of the house or the long descent of the family. Even if this Massy were a Puritan, and I rather think he was on the side of the Parliament, he might be excused a little strong language at losing

AUDLEM CHURCH

his cattle and having to seek consolation and revenge from the Old Testament's denunciations of the wicked and the sinner.

Audlem village has a little quaint old church perched up on a steep bit of rock in its midst. Like other open churches it is well kept, has been fairly well restored without being spoilt, and has several interesting bits of architecture, old heads, old oak, and marks in the ancient porch that may have been caused (as the legends say) by the sharpening of arrow heads. There is a disused doorway high up which looks as if any one stept out of it now he would step into empty space. Then there is a butter market at the bottom of the church steps, but there is no butter, no women, and no one about. Every

MOSS HALL

one seems asleep even at noon. A calm and placid little town where the kittening of a cat would cause some temporary excitement.

We journey on to Buerton Hall, where cousins named Nunnerley refresh us with cream cheese—not the cheese of commerce, but the cream of the cream simply pressed solid in coarse cloth. What food for lords and cyclists! Near to the house is a fox's earth where bones and feathers and fur show how the dear little cubs are fed. From the carcase of a cochin hen it would seem that even the cubs turned up their sharp noses at that old stringy thing and asked their Ma to bring them something tender. In country places we always speak of *the* fox, not *a* fox, just as in savage tribes they speak of the bear or the wolf, and in theological circles they speak of the devil. It is a survival of the propitiation of the power of the evil.

From Buerton we go steadily uphill to Woore, where three counties join, with the usual result, a lawless people. For here was the great rendezvous for prize-fights, cocking and racing, it being so easy to step from one county to another. Once a year, when the North Staffordshire Hunt holds its steeplechase meeting, the district becomes feverishly excited, as in the olden time, everybody entertains everybody else, if not with home-brewed and home-made, with tales and tips. Although I still religiously preserve the old breed of gamecocks known as Lord Derby's, I have never taken any there as my forbears did, but I have been to see a racehorse of my own breeding run.

At Woore we had the unpleasant experience of

riding through festoons of caterpillars. The oaks were stripped of their foliage and were swarming with filthy caterpillars that hung in ropes and swayed across the roads with the wind. Their millions might have eaten us if we had given them the chance, but we hurried on to Mucklestone's beautiful church. From it Queen Margaret watched the battle of Blore Heath, and by it lately dwelt a blacksmith, Skelhorn, lineal descendant of one of the same name who then reversed her horse's shoes. Here I knelt in the high-backed pew when a child, and was told the country gorby's responses in the Litany were not, as in town churches, "We beseech Thee to hear us, good Lord," but, "We be sheep shearers, good Lord," for the good Lord knew that if we had much to do with sheep we should be so sheepish, so jolly innocent, that any ordinary or convenient sins would be forgiven us at once. Of my uncle, the churchwarden, I wrote more fully in what is perhaps the best of my writings, "Schoolmasters" in "Folk Lore."

We soon begin to mount again. Stonier and steeper becomes the lane until at last we reach the gate to Mucklestone Wood. Stretching ourselves amid the gorse and broom and bracken we breathe that glorious air and almost gasp at the great scene that is spread out before us. No picture could be painted to do justice to that. The landscape is too vast, the details too crowded. The house itself stands plain and lonely, a well-known landmark when at varying intervals it gets a coat of whitewash. It was built in 1777, far from other houses, partly as a home for an idiot, and has been through many changes. The drawing is from a water-colour that I took forty years ago. The two birch trees joined together like the Siamese twins was a favourite seat of mine. There were many contorted birch trees thereabouts, but they became scarcer in the schoolmaster-churchwarden days, for as the Psalmist says—

> "'Tis education forms the common mind,
> And with the birch we drive it in behind."

It was education of a sort, and the memory of it is still to me a source of never-failing amusement. My intense love of natural history and farming was in a remote and wild country where all should be free and happy, meeting a narrow little circle, where under the most decorous respectability, the most horrible oaths and curses constantly burst forth, and prophecies of impending ruin to us and all the world frightened us even in our childhood's beds.

MUCKLESTONE WOOD

It was Toryism *in excelsis*, the politics being inflamed by a country newspaper that struggled with existence once a week, the religion being taken from the parson and the catechism.

In quieter mood let me take up my parable and give some local illustrations of the history of England.

On our extreme left there rises boldly up the great mass of the Wrekin. In their comprehensive toast of "Here's to all round the Wrekin" the proud Salopians look upon their sacred mountain as the centre of the universe. At its foot is the Roman city Uriconium (Wrekinium), where you may even now still see the

homes and the bones of the Romans. Dimly beyond it is the conical hill of Caradoc, said by some to be the home of Caractacus, the British King, who was dragged in triumph through the streets of Rome. Where is now the power of Rome? The British bards cursed it—

> "Rome shall perish! Write that word
> In the blood that she has spilt.
> Perish, hopeless and abhorred,
> Deep in ruin as in guilt."

That lower hill to the right with the monument is Hawkstone, where dwells Lord Hill; and when one drinks the local toast of "Here's to the hills of Hawkstone, may they last for ever," it may mean the lords or it may mean their land. Notable men have there been reared—mayors and preachers and fighters—the founder of the penny post was named after the spouter—but the monument is not to them. Further to the right again is Clive's of The Styche, the birthplace of the conqueror of India, the avenger of the Black Hole of Calcutta, he who got all the wealth of the Indies for the English when India would have been seized by the French or the Dutch, and changed the destinies of millions of men. If that adventurous youth had tumbled off the tower of Market Drayton Church (which we plainly see five miles away) when he had so rashly climbed it, how the fate of empires might have gone adrift! Here, down below us, is the bloody field of Blore Heath, where our forefathers slew one another in heaps. Two thousand gentlemen of Cheshire slain; the parti-coloured white and red roses of York and Lancaster bloom over their commingled graves—

> "But what they fought each other for
> We never quite made out."

Beyond all, in dim blue vista, there rises the rampart of the great mountains of Wales, a borderland of centuries of strife. Still turning with the sun to the right, beyond

the woods of Adderley, whose squire shot the soulers, is the ghost-haunted Combermere Abbey, one of the few religious charities that is still to some extent in the hands of the family of the spoilers. The curse of the founder, which is still in writing and unexpiated, seems to brood over it, and grisly spectres rise from their forgotten graves to avenge the robbery of the charity that was given to the poor and needy for ever. Further round again is Beeston's castled crag, built by your ancestors to be a den of thieves—here I turned to look at X and found him peacefully dozing.

When men are accused of sleeping at inconvenient times they generally deny it, then excuse it, then justify it, and then turn to it again. X said he was not asleep, though he had had a bad night; the air was very pure and pleasant up there, and he felt restful and happy, and would like a smoke if I would go on talking. I asked, if the air be so nice why spoil it with filthy tobacco? The butterflies would have settled on him but for that pipe. The fragrance of the flowers and herbs floated around us, and the buzzing and droning of the bumble bees in the foxgloves mingled in unison with my voice as I felt the pleasures of memory on seeing again like another Rip Van Winkle the scenes of fifty years ago.

There was the Tadsdale with its noted well of water which we used for bathing, and where I saw the short-tailed grey-barred real-wild cat. There was the bilberry wood where the girl was bitten by the adder and her body swelled up yellow and black, with the zig-zag markings of the snake. A gamekeeper brought us another of the venomous beasts, with its head in a forked stick, cautioning us not to leave it where the pigs could get it or they would eat it, and in spite of their thick hide if Mr. Adder got his fangs in, Mr. Piggy would soon become pork, and then what would be done with the bacon? We knew well enough what would be done

THE OLD PARSONAGE, ASHLEY

with it; we should have to eat it, just the same as we ate the hens that were drowned in the swill.

Then there were the cows. I remember them all by their names and where they stood in the shippons. First was Beeston, a whitish cow with red neck that gave bloody milk one night. They said it was my fault, for I must have taken a swallow's nest, and this was before public life had inured me to unjust accusations. Mulberry, that fell down the rock and broke her back and a

BUTTERCUP BLOSSOM BEAUTY

fir tree; Luby, an old-fashioned brindled long-horn; Tidy, a white-faced Hereford; Lovely, a skewbald; Star, yellow with star on forehead; and Cocket, spotted all over. How the old churchwarden cursed and swore when Cocket was barren. To think of them and their quiet lives often brings sleep to me when sleep is slow in coming, so even now, it may be, sleep is gently stealing o'er the drowsy reader.

X is lying in the lane with his back against the ditch bank, smoking a pipe, like a tinker; he lazily opens his eyes, and drawing a long deep breath, says he does not want to go anywhere or to do anything

BROUGHTON HALL

—why cannot I rest and smoke and be happy? I tell him there are pubs not very far away where they keep cows and cocks and hens, and perhaps we may get tea if we are patient and polite. There is the Loggerheads high up on Ashley Heath, and the Meynell Arms below, where, while tea is brewing, we photograph a delightful old parsonage, under big trees, with rotting thatch and leaning timbers, looking beautifully picturesque but rather neglected and forlorn. In the church, which was founded by a David Kenric a soldier of fortune under the Black Prince from the spoils of war taken from "a conquered enemy" (France), there are many elaborate monuments in striking attitudes, resplendent with the wealth and grandeur of the Lords Gerard of Gerards Bromley, Kinnersley, and others, the wonders of Ashley, gorgeous effigies of judges, warriors, women, and angels—all that art could do to give them immortality, hidden in this secluded spot. "Let us to tea and drown consideration."

In the balmy air the spirits of X revive, and he carols like a lark, for this is the song he sang as he leaned on the old stone wall in the lane by the side of the inn—

> "I knew by the smoke that so gracefully curled
> Above the green elm that a cottage was near,
> And I said, 'If there's peace to be found in the world,
> A heart that is humble might hope for it here.'"

That is all very well for a sentiment after tea, but there is more to be seen and a train to be caught, for if we are out all night there may be ructions. By the hamlet of Hookgate we rise to the high land of Ashley Heath again, with all its miles of glorious prospect. Through the Burnt Woods, famous for butterflies, we reach the beautiful church and Hall of Broughton. A lovely little church, very little altered and with much old glass, by the roadside, far removed from all houses but the Hall, which is a fine old rambling house with

BROUGHTON CHURCH

vast fireplace, having hiding-hole above and much to interest the antiquary. A novelist of the name is one of the family, and has woven descriptions of the place into her fancied scenes. The summer's evening is just right for photographing, though the shadows of the giant trees are lengthening and the hoarse voice of the corncrake comes from the lower meadows by the pool

BROUGHTON HALL

across which I am gazing to find the well-known Hall of Standon. But we must fly for home, and the best way is to make for Market Drayton and return by the unromantic train.

Up again through the Burnt Woods to the familiar Loggerheads — "when shall we three meet again" — then downhill for four miles on a good road in a lovely country. Right across the famous battlefield of Blore Heath, where we stay a minute that X may see the time-worn, weather-beaten cross erected to Lord Audley, the Lancastrian leader, and his men who fell in that

bloody slaughter on the Sunday morning in the harvest-tide of 1459, when the country legends say the Hemp-mill brook and the little river Tearn ran red with blood for days. Here we must not tarry, for the man who farms the land is extra cross, as one of my first pilgrimages told; but the roadside for miles has broad bands of flaming yellow broom in flower, and in it we may roll in gold. Literally, there are miles of brilliant golden borders to the road, and when we mount again the good bikes of themselves roll down the long hill towards the setting sun and on the way for home.

BROUGHTON CHURCH

# MESS, MEES, OR MEECE, HALL—SWYNNERTON

AS this pilgrimage was mainly to the place from whence came the direct male line of my fathers, and must therefore relate to family history more than some readers would like, this timely notice will enable them to skip it before they are wearied.

The etymology and derivation of names is an interesting study, especially when it is one's own name that is under investigation, and the changes that time has wrought in it as in all other things are known. When under the inquisition of the catechism we are asked what is our name and who gave us that name, it is all very well to put the responsibility of it on to our godparents, but where did *they* get it from? Now, my Christian name Fletcher was a surname meaning a fledger, or featherer of arrows, and Moss was almost certainly given as a distinguishing name to some male ancestor who lived on or by a moss.

It happened that my father was born at a very old house known as Mees Hall, which still stands near to the railway a little past Standon Bridge station, on the left as one goes from Crewe to Stafford. It is built of big blocks of warm-coloured stone up to the eaves, with stone mullioned windows, three timber-built gables, and big stone chimneys, and it stands by the little river Mees or Sow. The family left the place in the severe depression that came on the yeomen of England after the long wars with Napoleon, my grandfather selling his last

THE DESOLATE HOME OF MY FATHERS

bit of land in 1816, and the hall, which was very old then, is now owned by the Fitzherberts of Swynnerton, and looks as if precious little had been spent on it in the last hundred years.

The name of Mees, though very short, is spelt in different ways even on the signposts in the road. There are Coldmeese and Millmeece. Long ago I had wondered if Mees and Moss had originally been the same name, and lately I looked for the place in the great book which is the foundation of all local history, the Domesday Survey of the Conqueror. There I found "In Mess Vlfere tenuit Tra e II car," which I translate "In Mess Wolfer held two carucates of land." Another entry says, "In Ecleshelle Ipse eps ten in Mess"—"In Eccleshall the bishop himself holds Mess." Therefore the Church, in the shape of the bishops of Chester, grabbed the Saxons' land, and I have somewhere read that in after years the Priory of Ronton, a neighbouring religious house under the abbey of Haughmond, claimed some rights.

The Anglo-Saxon dictionary gives "meos" as their word for moss, the spelling looking like a compromise between moss and mess; and to make a note by the way, let me say that Ulf or some compound of the word, were common names with the Saxons when wolves were common in the land. In 1086 Wolfer held Mess. In 1812 Eliza Moss was born at Mees Hall, married a Woolf, and is still living within a mile of the place in full possession of her faculties, able to eat, drink, sing, and be merry at the age of ninety years.

To continue my search I looked up the Court Rolls for Staffordshire, and soon found many variations of the name, for to get into trouble and debt seems characteristic of the family. At the Stafford Assize of 1278 there is a notable entry, for it gives both forms of spelling the same short name—"Matilda, the widow of

MEES HALL

William del Mos, sued Richard, the son of William del Mes, for a third of a messuage and two virgates of land in Eddishale as her dower. Richard stated that he held as heir to his mother Margaret, and William, his father, never held the tenement in fee but only by courtesy of England, and therefore could not endow." This was about the time when surnames were coming into use, and it is evident that some William of Mos or Mes was taking his name from his land, which is still in the parish of Eccleshall, and that he had been married twice. In 1361 William del Mosse senior had his wife stolen, and actually made a fuss about it at the Stafford Assize.

Other generations come, and another William del Mosse was parson of Langport and one of the founders of the college of Tong. Another century and more rolled away, and in 1539 it was feared the Pope would invade England to avenge the robbery of his Church, when another William Mosse turned up as "a bilman without horse or harness." Then parish registers were instituted, and the neighbouring parishes of Eccleshall, Standon, and Swynnerton have plenty of material for the enterprising pedigree-hunter, the difficulty being to disentangle the entries.

May I insert here a curious old family legend which is absolutely true? It is that if any child of our family be christened Anne or a similar name it will very soon be dead My father had twelve brothers and sisters, only one of whom, namely Anne, died in infancy. With the preceding generations the fatality had always been the same, and when our time came my mother, whose mother had trained her in the customs of the Quakers, would call her first daughter Hannah, after her favourite sister. My father's family foretold disaster, at which my mother only smiled, but the child soon died, and she did not try the name again. In the Standon registers, as far back as 1594, I found the entry of baptism of

Anne, the daughter of John and Anne Moss, but that child was soon buried though all the others were reared.

When my father was christened (which was safely performed at Standon) some of the guests who were bidden to the feast became what they termed "market-fresh," and one who enthusiastically kept up old customs even to "Tummusing" on St. Thomas's day, was, when riding home through the little river "misbespilt" off the

MEES HALL

pillion into the water, where she peacefully sat "quite humble and calm."

Mess as a place-name has curiously altered. There must have been a mill on the little river, and a valuable fishery in very early times, for quarrels about the fishery in the waters of Mulnemees or Mylnemeese were frequent. Another part of the little manor became known as Coldmees. The latter name seems to me to be now generally written Coldmeese and the former Millmeece. I should like to mention here that when writing the history of Mayes's Charity, which is so

rapidly growing in Manchester, I found the donor's name in the Court Records was spelt Mease, but there are no records to show where he came from, and apparently he was not a native of Manchester, nor had relatives nor namesakes.

In the memory of some who are living, our family used to take presents or tributes of fish and waterfowl to Ranton Abbey. There would seem to have been some survival of sporting rights which I do not know more about. I had never seen the abbey, or what there was left of it, until the day that X went with me to find and photograph it. Leaving the train at Stafford, we went westwards for a few miles, and found a magnificent tower like that of a fine church standing near to a large house. This tower seemed to be used as a toolhouse by gardeners, who did not know whether we might photograph it, so I went round to ask. The Earl of Lichfield owns the place, and the house, though probably built from the ruins of the abbey, is plastered over as plain and ugly as it can be made, though it stands on a charming site. Those monks of old well knew where to build their nests. What is left of this is high on the steep banks of a mere where the blue waters are shaped like a horse shoe, and from their brink rise many-tinted woods on gently sloping hills, all bathed in bluish mist, resonant with the voice of the cuckoo and the love calls of waterfowl chasing one

RANTON ABBEY

another in the joy of spring. What a paradise it must have been, and might be now! But the house is like a plastered factory that will soon want whitewashing, and gardeners are dotting bedding-out plants about the blessed croquet lawn, where horrid hoops are formally set out and hideous wire-fencing shocks the harmony and spoils that stately abbey tower—bedding-out plants, scentless and useless, where once grew the fragrant flowers and herbs of the great gardeners, or the natural flora of the countryside. A grand old beech just bursting into tiny shimmering leaves and a gnarled and twisted fir still rear themselves erect as time-worn guardians of the ruins. Let us be thankful they are left, and we have dimly got their picture.

From Ranton Abbey we make our way to Eccleshall, that town of one broad street all cobbles from end to end and from side to side—cobble stones of all shapes and sizes. To ride over them on a bicycle would loosen the teeth and spoil the most angelic temper, so we walk, for we must see the fine old church, where unnumbered Mosses lie. Just about a hundred years ago they planted my great-grandfather, Thomas Moss, of Coldmeese, by the pathway to the porch. Inside the church is a marble slab to his uncle, another Thomas Moss, and yet a third of the name in the neighbourhood was parson of Trentham about that time, and probably suffered from the family failing of poverty, for he wrote a poem called "The Beggar's Petition" that we had to learn, and in which he said, "Heaven has brought me to the state you see," and he seemed to speak feelingly of the "pampered menial" who drove him from the door—

> "Pity the sorrows of a poor old man,
> Whose trembling limbs have borne him to your door,
> Whose days are dwindling to the shortest span,
> Oh! give relief, and Heaven will bless your store!"

Mees or Meece, both Cold and Mill, are in the parish of Eccleshall, though some miles from the church and much nearer to Standon and Swynnerton. We make for the latter place first, gradually mounting up in a wild and beautiful park. Swynnerton, or the town of swine, was a royal seat, a castle and manor from the times of the Saxons when swine were among the chief products of the land. In after years the swine upon the daisies was the standard of the lord whose castle stood upon the island in the pool. To-day an aristocratic air seems to brood over a divided picturesque village, where rival churches frown at one another across a narrow lane, the one sleepy, hallowed, and adorned by time, the other modern and aggressive though of the older faith, for it is backed by the big and ugly hall which is mercifully hidden for the greater part in stately trees, though the front of it is high above the countryside. Roundabout are ornamental cottages, lodges, schools, and inn. What good people these villagers should be with such a beauteous place and wealth of facilities for varied public worship!

The old church and the school and a neighbouring cottage were all locked, so I went to the inn, and found it was empty, all silent and lonely. In a backyard was an old woman. When I asked if she could tell me where to get the key of the church, she said, "What church?" I replied, "This church." But she persisted she did not know which church I meant, and was not going to waste her time with me. When I pointed to the church she would not look at it, and appeared likely to spit out and cross herself if she had accidentally looked upon it. Then we tried the rectory, where half-a-dozen terriers disputed the way, but a groom came out and brought us the key. He told us the woman at the inn and most of the villagers were of the same religion as their master, and I knew the Fitzherberts had not changed when ordered to do so, but had kept to the faith

of their fathers, and built an opposition shop after the old one had been wrested away or reformed. If the woman had known a little more she had no need to be so scared of even looking at the house of the heretics.

Swynnerton old church is very interesting. There is

WOLF'S HEAD DOORWAY, SWYNNERTON

a round-headed western door, with wolves' heads all round the arch, but the photograph does not show them well, the light not being good enough for time-worn stone. They may be seen on the middle circular arch, each wolf's head having two sharp ears pointing up and a sharp nose pointing down. A colossal figure of Christ, which was dug up from below the floor of the Chapel of

our Ladye, came out well, but the gem of the place, the crusader, founder of the church, whom X claims for an ancestor through Maud Swynnerton of the blood-royal, is nearly worn away. A cross-legged effigy in mail armour, grasping his long and heavy sword, with convex yard-long shield, six feet two in length, the same as the bones below, for they were lately measured again, and the red-

SWYNNERTON OF SWYNNERTON

dish brown hair and perfect teeth noted (for there were no dentists at the time of the first Crusade), believed to be of the first lord of Swynnerton, of whom another has written, "The one faithful sentry clad in full panoply lies in his dim recess with his feet to the east, his eyes fixed upon the altar as if waiting in stony patience for the day which may yet dawn, when the Host shall again be elevated in the sanctuary, and when the Masses of the Requiem for which he endowed with broad lands the church of his own building, shall once more startle his dull, cold ears with the witchery of a sound once

familiar, now well-nigh forgotten. It is a sad and pathetic thought that the grim old statue of him who built and endowed the church and struck many a hard blow for altar and home, should be merely an object of wonder in the spot where he lived and died. The descendants of his own hardy followers can only say, 'That is some old Crusader.'"

A LONG-BURIED STATUE OF CHRIST

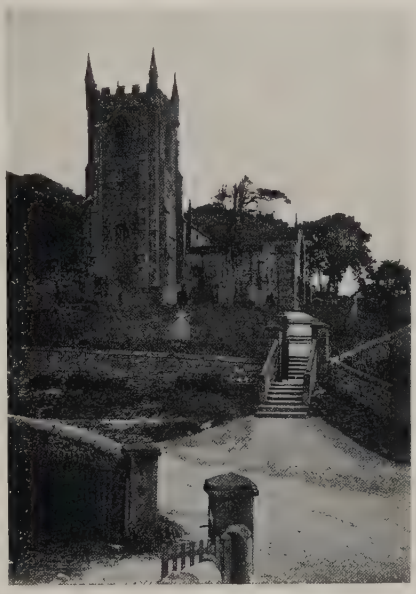
# DERBYSHIRE

THIS pilgrimage was in very different country from that in which we usually roam. We did not this time find a land with milk and honey flowing, but a stone-wall country with stunted wind-swept trees, bleak, barren, and bare; where a sparse population of withered folk who have been reared on oatcake and mutton or barley bread and bacon, have one long struggle with thin winds and hard fare from the cradle to the grave, until they become so thrifty and dour that, as the natives say, they die standing up. In our usual haunts there are blackberries and nuts on every hedge, apples and plums at times, mushrooms and bilberries for the gathering, always a promise of plenty, with cattle fat and well-liking, dosome and kindly. But in Derbyshire, if you see a few skinny sheep or a poor calf that looks "welly clemmed," they plaintively bleat at you as if they wanted something to eat. Even the bundles of black feathers known as rooks, crows, or daws, seem lightly wafted about by the fitful winds, as if they had never known the delicacies of stubble fields or turnips, and had great difficulty in keeping body and soul together.

Into this hard stony country went X and I to look after more ancestral homes, not that I wanted any ancestors from that district, for I should expect them to be uncommonly close-fisted and cross-tempered if they had ever gathered much together on those barren hills. But X said the air was beautiful, it was like champagne—which he never tastes—and on the distaff side, as the

heralds say, his children would have ancestors other than his, and therefore it was meet that we should see what manner of homes they had, and begin with the halls of Hartington and Beresford.

It was well known to me that Hartington used to be ten miles from everywhere, and more than that from some places. Buxton, Matlock, Ashbourne, Leek are on different sides, each being about ten miles away. But now there is a railway, and we made use of it, not knowing whither we might wander after. Hartington station is like the other places; it has kept miles away from the town, being up on the hills in a desert, but after one or two awkward corners there is a fair road in a beautiful valley, down which the cyclist may roll into the town. It is a nice, open, clean-looking little town, with broad streets, and an ancient cruciform church aloft on a steep hill in the centre. The porch is huge and "as wide as a church door," with a niche for the patron saint above the entrance, and on the wall by it a large sun-dial, whose motto was, "So marches the God of day." There are many incised slabs and curiosities, the several pillars in the nave being of unequal heights. The steepness of the path and steps seems to me to be prohibitory to old folks attending the church, but perhaps there are no stout ones here; chill penury would starve them to



HARTINGTON CHURCH

the bone. St. Giles, the patron saint of beggars, is the guardian angel of the parish, for no doubt he was wanted when its history began.

On the side of a hill that is steeper than the roof of a house there is great difficulty in securing our bicycles, and when we have clambered down again in safety we have to climb up another hill to the hall. As

HARTINGTON HALL

for Beresford Hall, we are told it has tumbled down into heaps of stones, and we should have to struggle up and down steep paths for a mile or more. So we leave it alone, and also the fishing-house of Izaak Walton and Charles Cotton, the "Piscatoribus Sacrum, 1674," which we had seen before. The most interesting thing to me about Beresford is the fact that it was originally Beversford or Beaversford, and, like Beverley, had taken its name from the industrious little beaver who has perished from the land. Hartington Hall has the initials of the Batemans, and the dates 1611 and 1867 over its front door.

GATEWAY, TISSINGTON HALL

As to our further journey we had much consultation, doubting whether we could get through Dovedale, but finally we decided to strike into the wilderness and go across the hills for Tissington. There being an oasis by the way where a few straggling trees, a cattle cote, and a stone wall afforded some shelter for the stone-breakers, we sat upon a heap of middling hard stones to have our frugal lunch. Our talk was on the country round and the land question. X who strongly believes in the nationalisation of the land—that is, the land for the people—but who seldom misses an opportunity of buying all he can and sticking to it—though he explains that he will give it up when the law is altered and others do the same—waxed indignant at the trouble he was having about Kinder Scout, which he owns and which was always being trespassed on, Stockport then having a Bill in Parliament to take all the water, some of the land, and spoil the rest. So, as the opportunity was fitting, it being his birthday, I urged on him to put his theories into practice and give the whole place to Manchester, who could do with the water and the fresh air as well as Stockport. The idea pleased him, but he said it was scarcely fair that he should lose all the money, but if the city liked to give him cost-price they could have it, and I might say so. This seemed a good offer—three thousand acres, mostly moorland, some of it two thousand feet high, some farms known to readers of "David Grieve," all the water rights, fifteen miles only from the city, from whence an electric tram could be made, the whole at a cost of half a farthing in the pound on the rates. The next Wednesday was the day of the July Council meeting, but the mischief-makers who, under the guise of honesty, indulge in evil-speaking and slandering, got to work on another matter, and I held my peace and said nothing. The difficulties with Stockport were settled in Parliament, in the first four days of the shooting season four hundred grouse were

TISSINGTON WELL

bagged off the moors, and whether our great city ever has Kinder Scout given to them for "the price of an old song" the future only can tell.

On we go again. Up and down, up and down, on hills that are bleak and barren and bare. We cannot ride up, and we dare not ride down. The cows are gadding with tails aloft, for the gadfly is seeking to lay its eggs, not stopping to think how its young can be fed on cows that are merely skin and bone. We journey on for a better land, and at Tissington find it there.

The village of Tissington is one long and very wide grass-bordered road, with the hall on one side, the ornamental well on the other, the church beyond, all very striking from the breadth of the road. To the hall there is a stately Jacobean gateway, and as builders are about we wander anywhere with no one to hinder us. Having heard of the gardens I go round to see them, and find them nearly all stone steps with balustrades and terraces. As for flowers, there are more flowers in a few yards of this old garden at Didsbury than there would be there in an acre. Even the grass on the lawn is overgrown with coarse plantain and ribwort. Nearly opposite the hall is the well so famed for being dressed with flowers at certain heathenish feasts, a time of great enjoyment to the countryside. It has been elaborately built over with drinking-places for various sorts of animals, and a recess under cover where we might have a bath when it rained if there was no one looking. The framework and skin of a poor old horse comes and with difficulty tries to drink, but its legs are thicker at the bottom than the top, and its joints are stiff with bony growths, spavin, and splint and ringbone. X says, "It is a Derbyshire horse at the fountain," and he photographs the poor wretch, and gets a picture of misery, showing what a horse may be when fed upon the mouldy hay and musty oats of the county. I should like to

TISSINGTON

give it a handful of beans for once in its life, but perhaps they would bring on intoxication or a fit.

We are told there is not an inn in the village; but we see some hens, and as we are wondering whether we can get raw eggs and eat them by the well for tea, we find a house where they will fit us up. While they are making ready we inspect the church. It is on rising ground, sheltered by noble trees of great age. One looks as if the daws had built in its hollow trunk and piled up platforms of sticks for centuries. The church is in great part actually Norman. The very solid tower has no stairway. The round-headed doorway has old sculpture, little figures with arms akimbo, and hieroglyphics that we cannot translate. There is a curious old font, and there are gorgeous and elaborate monuments of the Fitzherberts, another branch of the Swynnerton family. The little church is very dark, but the Norman arches and other relics are good, and it is open and clean.

In our tea-room is a musical instrument, on which X begins to play, and I caution him that if he goes on like that he will turn the milk sour. He says it is only a sonata or symphony, or something or other, very charming, and cannot hurt anything. I take his tune to be something in the psalm-singing line, and feel sure it will turn the milk or cream sour. Tea does not come in for a few minutes, and then he finds for himself that the milk really is beginning to curdle, and he will not have any. So I drink it up before it has time to go worse. We have then to consider our next move, and how to get home. Dovedale is now out of the question, and I suggest we go to Ashbourne, where there is a fine church, with possibilities of lots of ancestors, almshouses, and a grammar-school, with a most beautifully illuminated charter of the time of Elizabeth. He agrees to go to Ashbourne. The first part of our way was under a fine avenue of old trees in the park of the hall, and

then along a good road mostly downhill, and with fair scenery. At Ashbourne station we find that trains go to Stockport and Manchester in opposite directions, and that two companies generally start a train about the same time, each trying which can be longest on the way —a most wearisome journey. Cycling might have been as fast, and far pleasanter, if there had been a good road. This was our first pilgrimage into Derbyshire, and our second, after a year's interval, was no better, and so far we have not been there again.

THE BLUE PIG

A good creature who kindly provided the chawl for lunch. It is melancholy to think every bit of him has been eaten.

# DICK WHITTINGTON'S PROBABLE BIRTHPLACE

ANY one who is fond of cats, or Lord Mayors or success in life, the marrying of a beautiful girl with lots of money, the making of a fortune and immortal fame, is probably interested in Dick Whittington, and would like to learn from whence he came. Several counties claim the honour of his birth. A parson has written a book about him, full of assertions without proofs, fit for those who have plenty of faith, but not for those who wish to get at the facts, and a knight has enlarged upon it. Let me tell the tale in its oldest form, and then judge what is likely.

Once upon a time, in London's famous city, where the streets were paved with gold (it is now about five hundred and fifty years ago), there was a certain rich merchant known as Hugh Fitz Warren, who found a poor lad starving on his doorstep. He took him in in charity, and told his cook to give him food and find him work. The lad was an orphan, a stranger in the city, and the cook bullied him. An old pamphlet has preserved his first order: "Clean the spit and dripping-pan, make the fire and wind the jack, or I'll break your head with the ladle and make you a football." He was the scullion, servant of servants, but his master's daughter, Mistress Alice, asked him about his kindred and gave him old clothes.

A merchant who stayed all night gave him a penny for cleaning his shoes. With this, his first money, he bought a cat, for the garret in which he slept was

swarming with rats. The tale of the buying of the cat sounds true. A woman who had a good mouser offered it to him for sixpence, and he bought it for a penny. It is like a woman to ask sixpence for what was worth a penny, and not unlike a merchant prince to buy for a penny what may have been worth sixpence. The cat proved to be a great success, and it is very probable that through a cat Dick won his young mistress's favour and his first rise to fortune. Still he was unhappy. The cook would neither quit nor die, and as all the world knows Dick ran away early on All Hallows' Day. But the immortal chimes recalled him. Who does not know what was said by the bells of Bow?

"Turn a-gain, Whit-ting-ton
Thrice Lord Mayor of Lon-don!"

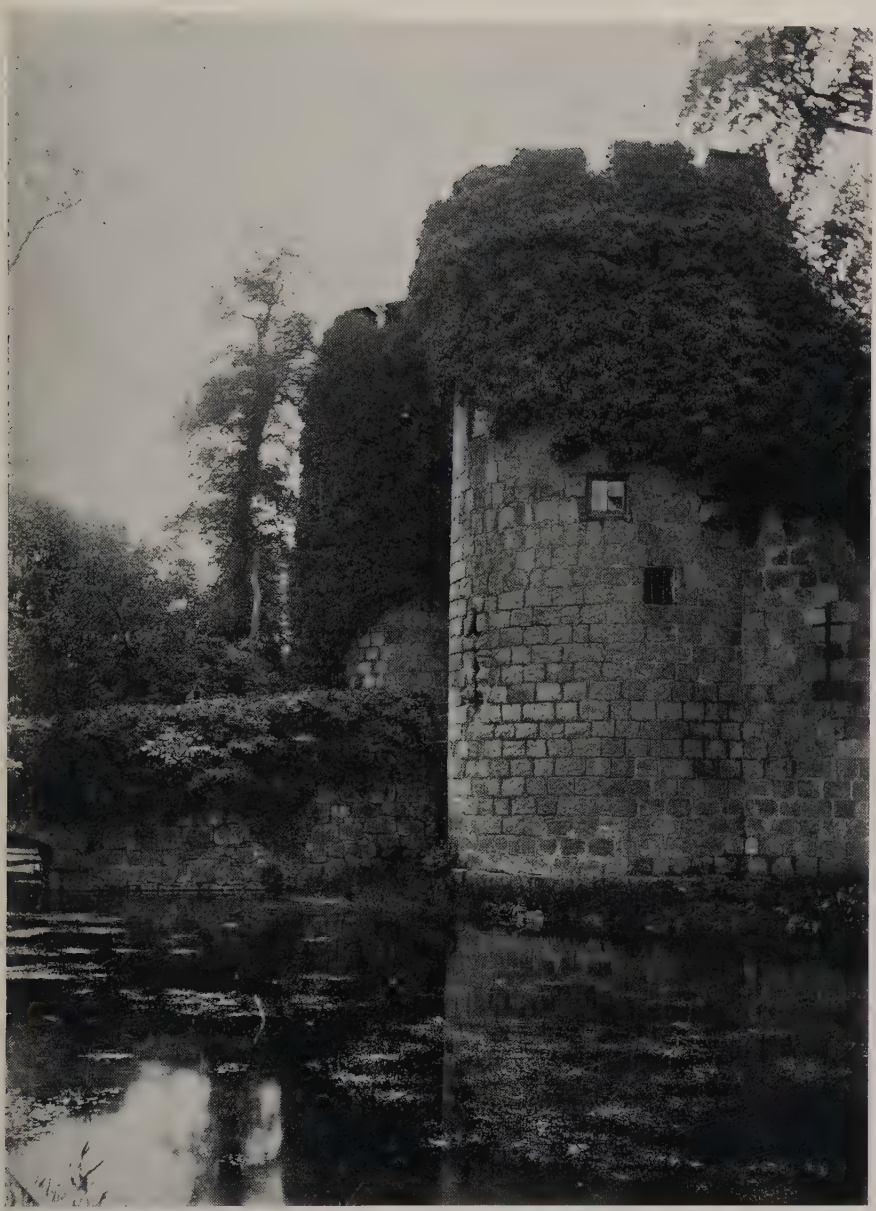
He did turn again. His master was venturing a ship, as a merchant's foreign business was then called, and all his servants (as the custom also was) had to venture something with him. This insured their prayers and good wishes, gave them a share in the business, and was co-operation centuries before co-operation was heard of. Dick was told he would have to venture something, but he fell on his knees, and begged them not to jeer at him, for he had nought but a cat. "Just the thing we want," said the captain of the ship; "it will keep down the rats." So Dick ventured his all, which was rather speculative, and the mice at the merchant's house breathed freely again.

The ship got wrecked, and the cat was taken to the Sultan of Gingerbeer, which was somewhere in Barbary, where she was worth her weight in gold in ridding the palace of the rats, and the Sultan sent Dick a casket of jewels for her. When the old merchant saw those jewels, and who they were for, according to the Bill of Lading, he nudged Alice, and said, "Alice, my lass, thou must have these jewels by hook or by crook. Dick's a good lad and steady; he would take care of thee when I

am gone. Thou hadst better wed him, jewels and all." Now, Alice was no chicken; she was much older than Dick to start with, but she knew how to humour her father, for she was wise and good, and as beautiful as the young ladies in the Sunday-school picture books. So the old man sent for "Mr." Whittington, and when Dick came he fell on his knees again, as was the custom in those days for a man to do to his master, and Alice gave him the casket of jewels, telling him they were his in return for the cat, and he said she had better keep them. She said "Oh no, I couldn't really," and simpered and giggled till her father ordered the wedding, and each of them made Mr. Whittington a partner. Then he became a mercer and merchant adventurer, being introduced on 'Change at Chepe, where he proved a nailer, for he made heaps of money, and was chosen for the city council, where he made more by fitting up the army for the French war, which was meritorious in those days, though it would be desperately wicked now, all showing how much better we are than our fathers, and how much nearer to heaven.

Thrice Lord Mayor of London, as the bells had foretold, but in time a childless widower, this *flos mercatorum* wrote: "A prudent, wise, and devout man should make . . . dedys of mercy and pite, and especially provide for those miserable persons whom the penurye of poverty insulteth . . . and to whom the power of bodily labour is interdicted." Then he built churches, almshouses, hospitals, and a prison, some of which, or the relics of them, remain unto this day, but his own tomb is said to have been rifled by the parson, who stole even the inner leaden coffin. The church and all were burnt in the great fire of London, but the undying fame of Dick Whittington grew brighter than ever through nursery songs and ballads for children.

How much of all this is true? I see no reason to doubt the truth of anything excepting a few details. Where Dick came from is the riddle I am trying to



WHITTINGTON CASTLE

unravel, and it seems to me that all the attempts to prove him of knightly family were made after his death, since he never mentioned his father or mother or even his own age, as though he had known nothing whatever of his birth. Namesakes might claim kinship when the rich man was dead, but where would be the romance of the poor lad's rise? It was about this time that it was becoming usual for the common people to have a surname, and he, a stranger and orphan in London, would most probably be called after the place of his birth, or from whence he came. Therefore I believe he was from some place named Whittington, there being several places of that name. It is somewhere recorded that Roger de Hampton, the vicar of Ellesmere, had given the lad a recommendation to the Prior of St. Bartholomew's, London. This should be good evidence, as Hampton and Ellesmere are both near to Whittington in Shropshire, and Roger was vicar there (*circa* A.D. 1361) when Dick set out to seek his fortune. Here also is another striking fact The lords of Whittington for many centuries had been, and were then, the Warins, Fitz Warins, or Fitz Warrens the same name as Dick's master. It therefore seems to me almost certain that Dick went from Whittington in Shropshire, that he may have been an illegitimate son of some of the castle folk, and that he tried his luck with a family connection rather than at St. Bartholomew's Priory.

How many of the millions who flock to see Dick Whittington burlesqued in pantomimes have ever seen the village, one of the prettiest in all England, where, I believe, he first saw the light? In the secluded spots of our favoured land time deals gently with our English homes; and dull indeed must be the soul of him who, journeying in our country lanes, could come unmoved to where the lordly castle of the once great family of Fitz Warins rises from the flowery waters of the moat in the village street of Whittington. It is seven hundred years since the Norman barons built that round-towered castle

WHITTINGTON CASTLE

as another outpost pushing further back the Welsh from Shrewsbury. To show the suspicions that were rife on every side, an urgent writ was sent to the Earl of Chester in 1222 to watch that Whittington Castle was not made stronger than was necessary, for it might be turned against the English. One of the Warins sided with Llewelyn, and others were freebooters and outlaws, as often as not. The son of another was brought up with Prince John; banged his head with a chessboard, and years afterwards made him sign Magna Charta. Another Warin offered the King of England the best horse in all Wales if he would give judgment in his favour, the bribe to be got from the foreign land. What stirring times they had! Another terrible tragedy that may have been the origin of another pantomime was possibly plotted here. Another Warin or Warren, Lord Marcher, with a Mortimer, were guardians of the infant orphan princes of the royal line of Wales, a young Llewelyn and Griffith, and they dropped the lads into a hole in the sacred river Dee and took their estates, giving the King of England his share of the spoil, and the waters of the river and the stream of life around flowed on as if nothing unusual had happened.

The round towers of the castle, after seven centuries of storms and war, still rise from the placid waters which encircle them, by the side of the country road and farther on are open fields On the other side the lane is a straggling, dreamy English village, with crowded cedars round a spoiled and altered church a picturesque inn known as "The Boot," and sundry cottages of varied styles, all charming in their sleepy quietude.

The district council's modern water-cart is pumping water from among the ducklings and the water flowers in the baron's moat, to deg the roads in modern fashion, when the first drops of a thunder shower come fast and heavy, driving us to the shelter of the village smithy where we watch the shoeing of a horse. In hunting days it was not unusual to watch our hunters being shod,

and still the old complaint holds good, for the smith cuts too much horn away and makes the shoe too big. When were horses first shod? Has the custom changed at all since the Romans left their cast-off shoes behind them? Again we smell the smell of red-hot iron on the horny hoof, and watch the muscles of the brawny arms with measured beat and slow—

> "And children coming home from school
> Look in at the open door,
> They love to see the flaming forge,
> And hear the bellows roar."

Are there any future Lord Mayors among these children? They may be standing on the same spot, by the same castle walls, watching a horse being shod, as Dick himself may once have watched, before he set out for the city that was paved with gold. Little did he reck then of the ups and downs that fortune had in store for him, and when worsted in his first fight he ran away weary and homesick, the voices in the bells nerved him for another struggle: "Turn again, turn again, future Lord Mayor"!

WHITTINGTON

# JACK MYTTON'S HALSTON

MY last tale was of Whittington, the place and the man. This is of Holystone or Halston, a place adjoining Whittington, but of a man as different from the famous Dick as one man can differ from another. Jack Mytton, the squire of Halston, was very noted among sportsmen in the days of our grandfathers. He inherited vast wealth, all of which he squandered, and died in debt; a strong body, which he wrecked in middle age; a fitful, wild, and restless nature, whose unbridled passions dragged him deeper and deeper into the abyss of drink and delirium.

The Muttons were a family of Shropshire squires for centuries, the derivation of their name being so obvious in a borderland where sheep-stealing might be patriotism that it was embellished into Mytton. They were probably of a race rather wilder and more ungovernable than usual even in the mixed breeds of the border, for none of the fathers for many generations had ever lived to see their sons grow up to manhood. It may be that each succeeding generation, lacking all parental control, got wilder and wilder until the eccentricity culminated in the man of whom I write.

It is about a hundred years since this John Mytton was born. My father's eldest brother knew him, and in our childhood told us wonderful tales about him. X and I slightly knew his children. A life of him was written by a friend named "Nimrod," a copy of the original edition of which lately sold for £19. Jack Mytton in-

herited the beautiful estate of Halston, £10,000 a year, and accumulated rents. He was sent to school at Westminster, where he spent £800 a year, and wrote to his guardian, Lord Eldon, the Lord Chancellor, asking for more money as he was going to be married, he being then of the mature age of fourteen years. His stern legal guardian replied, "Sir, if you cannot live on your allowance you may starve, and if you marry I will commit you to prison." As he grew up his great delight was in fighting or playing at highway robbery. He disguised himself and robbed his own butler, who had been sent to Oswestry for money and boasted no one would take it off him. Then he waylaid the doctor and the parson together, frightening them into fits. If a man wanted a place as gamekeeper he was always told to watch a wood where a sweep went poaching. One strong, determined man had a great struggle with the sweep, and dragged him to the hall, where he turned out to be the young squire much battered and bruised.

When riding about the country he would take his horse into the inn or farmhouse to warm it by the fire and give it ale or beef as he had himself. He kept packs of hounds, racehorses, fighting cocks, badgers for baiting, polecats, monkeys, bears. A friend who went to Halston one day, seeing, as he rode into the stableyard, a bear chained up, exclaimed, "Ah, Bruin!" and the groom who came to take his horse said, as he touched his cap, "Yes, sir, we all'us brews 'ere every week." Mytton rode the bear into the dining-room amid his assembled guests, but as he spurred it, it bit his leg and mauled him sadly. A monkey was turned loose on a hunter after the hounds, to the great delight of the rustics. If a toll-gate were not open, Mytton would charge into it or jump it, which generally caused something to be smashed. To put the postboys in the carriage while he took it over hedge and ditch was as exciting as a steeplechase by moonlight.

All his tips were of gold, in a country where gold was seldom seen, and able-bodied men's wages were eight or ten shillings a week. No wonder if he were worshipped (while the money lasted) and men jumped at a glance from Jack Mytton. His valet once counted a hundred and fifty-two pairs of breeches, at a time when a good pair of buckskins or leathern breeches was handed down from father to son as an heirloom. Thirty thousand pounds a year could not have been spent if gambling had not got hold of him, but it came with stronger drink, and five or six bottles of port wine grew to be the daily allowance.

A genius like this was well fitted to stand for Parliament in the good old days when Shrewsbury's lambs were noted. The turmoil of a rough-and-tumble contested election just suited him, and when in fair public fight he licked the champion of the other side in five rounds he was soon at the top of the poll. Then he was High Sheriff of the county and officer in the Yeomanry and Hussars. His friends tried to give him a sound religious education, and he had a parson all for himself who lived in the house with him, but he rode his black pony upstairs into the parson's bedroom for prayers, and left it there all night. He also pushed his Reverence off the bridge into the pool, a prank the servants learnt to expect. So his religious instruction was abandoned and his education became purely secular, with random sporting unrestrained.

"It's the pace that kills," and no man could last his pace long. The blessing of death came to him at the early age of thirty-seven. "Distance lends enchantment to the view." His home remains, a scene of such tranquillity and beauty when we saw it on a bright day in June, that we could hardly credit it could have ever been the scene of so much wild and reckless wantonness. The house is a rather plain substantial building, about two hundred years old, with garden sloping gently

THE HOME OF JACK MYTTON

down in lawn and park to a placid pool or mere, which winds away amid gigantic trees on either side, and on the water's farther bank there is a gem of old-world loveliness, a "God's-acre." Girt about with a sunken fence, which the long grass hides until you are on it, is a time-worn black-and-white chapel, with big gilt weather-cock, shaded and encircled with the immemorial yews—alone in a spacious park. Round about, the white-faced Herefords browse up to the knees in clover. Swans with their dusky cygnets sail about among the water lilies and the golden iris, "floating double, swan and shadow." On swiftly whirring pinions a duck skims over our heads. The angler's joy, the luscious May-flies, are bobbing up and down all over grass and water, where the big fish rise with swirls to suck them under.

Rarest sight of all the living things is that stately bird, the heron. There were many of them majestically stalking about with grand baronial air, or on deeply curved and slowly flapping wings warily wending their flight away from the intruders. I thought of the stir there was in the *City News* some years ago, when some one, who helped to butcher all the herons, young and old, in a heronry at nesting-time, wrote to the paper to glory in his shame. The herons at Halston looked superb. In Mytton's time there were from fifty to eighty nests, and other water-fowl were abundant, as we know from his pursuit of them amid the ice and snow, by moonlight, and dressed in his night-shirt only.

A famous sanctuary was Halleston or Holystone as Halston was once writ; it may have been "holy" in the days of the mysterious Druids before Christianity was known in the land. The power or the dread of the sanctuary must have been great when it shielded the wild Welsh who had killed the officers of the King of the Lion's heart. Domesday tells us it was inhabited

THE GRAVE OF JACK MYTTON

by two Welshmen and one Frenchman (that is, Norman), but it does not say how long the one Frenchman was left alive by the two Welshmen. For more than three hundred years this vast and wealthy manor was owned by the Knights Hospitallers, for whose hospice tithes and rents were garnered in from other parishes, while their own chapel was exempt (and still is) from episcopal jurisdiction. At the sack of the military and religious orders, these "holy" knights were turned adrift, but even here the oft-quoted curse on the families of the spoilers seems to have come home to them.

Under the altar in the little chapel lies "Jack" Mytton. Round about are hatchments, flags, and tabards, ensigns and mottoes. The crest of the ram's head has probably some connection with the name of Mutton. The mottoes are "Mors iter vitæ" (Death is the way of life), and "In cœlo quies" (In heaven is rest, or, It's quiet in heaven), as if it could be heaven to be quiet for one who never would be quiet, whose pleasure was in excitement, whose joy was in the frolics of a monkey and the restlessness of a hyena. "The wild squire" may be quiet now, but Halston may be sold, and if some prosperous shopkeeper bought it, he would buy Jack Mytton's body as part of the freehold, planted there and his by the law of the land. The new parson would probably say the old church was damp, or draughty, or dark, and a churchwarden-builder would propose some cheap alterations just to restore it a bit, and that would be the time to have a look at "Jack" and see if any keepsakes or valuables had been buried with him. Let us hope for the best and be thankful we can record pictures of this fair scene ere the evil days come again.

The water winds amid the woods, where in misty haze the grey and ghostly herons glide as phantoms of the days when their young lord climbed trees which no one else could climb that he might have some heron pie. Above us and around the air resounds with the grand

chorus of the choir invisible. Unseen larks are showering down their "careless rapture" from the skies. Every bush and tree is lively with its happy warblers, the hawthorn's scent is mingled with the perfumes of fields of flowers. The golden light of June bathes in its glow all the rich luxuriance of an English park, where everything that hath breath exults in the joy of living in the spring-tide—basking in Paradise.

JACK MYTTON STOPPING THE DOCTOR AND THE PARSON
A GOOD SNAPSHOT

# THE WORLD'S END

THIS pilgrimage was to the World's End, up in the mountains of Wales; and if any Englishman heard a Welshman say Plas Uchaf Eglwyseg he would think the end of the world or of somebody was imminent. In English it is named the end of the world, for so it proved itself to be to many who had gone up there, and either stepped over the edge of the world into empty space or been eaten by the Welsh, for few returned again. X had been ferreting out more ancestors, and found that one of his roots took him to a Welsh princess, who had been stolen from her husband and hidden in the mountains, a place we ought to find. I felt quite frightened at the prospect, for the Welsh have such fearful pedigrees and language, but we determined to go on pilgrimage, though we might have to sleep out all night or be lost in the wilderness of the hills.

The nice little romance attached to the place is somewhat as follows. When it was customary for the Princesses of Wales to be sent to London to be taken care of and educated in polite society, the King of England honoured them by becoming father of their children and then marrying them to some of his men, who, with the children, were made nobles, this being the teaching of manners and the elementary education of the times. King Henry the First behaved in this right royal fashion to the Princess Nesta, who was one of the millions of women the most beautiful who ever lived. When she had settled down for a second family with her new Lord, Gerald Earl of Pembroke and its stately castle, a hot-headed son of Cadogan, the Prince of South

Wales and Powys, named Owen, gathered a band of reckless comrades round him, surprised the Norman baron in his revelry, fired the castle, stole the mistress with her children, and fled through night and day to the mountains of Powysland.

At once war's red ruin flashed along the border. Promptly every Welshman on the English side of Offa's Dyke had his throat cut; the same for those on the other side the dyke if they could be caught. Every Welshman fled at once to the hills with his droves of black cattle and pigs, there to hide till storms and famine drove the English home. Every Welshman vanished as the Norman chargers and the Cheshire archers came, but woe-betide even the mail-clad knights who were cut off amid the hills, for they never saw their native land again. As time rolled on this Nesta, who, "like another Helen fired another Troy," went back to her former husband, for the country became too hot for Owen, who sought what was quietude for him in Ireland; and the end of Nesta's matrimonial adventures ultimately resulted in eight sons and two daughters.

Legends kindly tell us a bit more of this romantic tale. In the never-ending feuds of border warfare the Norman earl and the Prince of Wales in after years found themselves fighting on the same side, but sides and friends were tossed aside when they knew one another. The injured and the injurer, Norman Gerald and Welsh Owen, gripped in the fierce hate which death alone could end, and dare-devil Owen's last fight was fought.

To find the historic home of the fair Nesta we went by train to Ellesmere, and then cycling to the west by north we passed a place called Pwll y rhos, which is said to be in England, though its name does not look like it. At St. Martin's is a fine old church a little from the road, with ancient yews near by, and there we regaled ourselves on gooseberries, which in their season are always good to take. A fancy dogcart, with good horse and well-appointed groom, came past, and shortly we

came to where the road opened out into a broad space, with stately lodges and park gates standing far back. Then it was down to the river Ceiriog and up a long, long hill to Chirk. Here I stayed in the church making notes, for there are interesting monuments showing the dress of two hundred years ago and the brazen assurance some folks have of heaven. As large as life, in enormous curly wigs, flowing neckties, gigantic heels, and big square toes are Sir Richard Myddelton and his son, the father "Heir to the Vertues as well as the Estates of the Illustrious House of Chirk, great" in lots of things, "but in nothing so great as in Himself." The son's "exalted Piety qualified him for that place whither he hastened to receive the rewards of his Vertues." Then there is a fierce-looking cavalier, whose head appears to have been knocked off and put on rather awry. His wife does look a comfortable woman, and there is a baby, solid and cross. In the churchyard the stench was horrible. That was sermon enough. But under the yews where an artist was sketching there was no smell, another note for the good old trees.

X, returning, said he could not find a public-house, but then he never was a proper Churchman, for it has been said that if a good old Tory Churchman was blindfolded and turned loose from the church door, his instinct would take him to the nearest inn. I soon found one. We had some good cider, and travelled on again for the gorgeous gates of the castle. Here we turned aside to the left and went by the back way through the park and woods. Some red things that jumped up and down from out of the bracken puzzled me for some time, but I guessed them to be fawns playing leap-frog while the deer were lying down. There are miles of woods of grand timber, straight and well-grown oaks, the whole park reminding me of Hawarden. The shade was grateful, for the day was intensely hot. We could not get into the castle, and were told not to photograph as the master detested

photographers, and was just at the age when men are very cross. I asked how old he was, and was told, "About the same as yourself, sir."

By going across the park in front of the castle we saved three miles, and were soon at Llangollen, a town I had not seen for forty years. We made many inquiries about our further route, but no one seemed to know anything about it—they had never heard of Nesta, or the place, or its history. At last an ostler thought he knew where it was, and suggested donkeys. He said it was seven miles uphill of bad road, and hard to find. He looked with contempt on bikes, as all ostlers do, and of course they would not be adapted for the journey. Then he asked if we would have a young horse in a dogcart and a driver who knew the way. That was just the thing we wanted, and after some ominous delay we were told not to stay in the stableyard but to wait at the hotel door. Our patience was being tried, when there was a rattle and a bang as a spirited young horse dashed up out of the yard, nearly killing a woman and child, upsetting a handcart, and catching a wheel of the 'bus.

This looked a likely sort to find the end of the world as far as we were concerned, and I advised X to get up behind, as his life was more valuable than mine, and I would sit in front and hold on by the splashboard. Was there plenty of brown paper and string? for we might come back in bits and want wrapping up; but the driver merely said, "No feah foteffah." Over the bridge, where even cyclists are requested to go carefully, we went lurching from side to side with chances for going over the parapet. What beautiful language the Welsh is under provocation! It might be Psalms in Cymraeg. One cabman swore in English; that sounded homely. Our charioteer always reiterated, "No feah foteffah," and explained that the horse was a good young horse that had seldom been in harness and was used to the hills; all evidently correct. "But why," I asked, "do

you let him get his head down and gallop like that? He is running away." The man merely repeated, "No feah foteffah; he get short of breath some time and stop." It all seemed very Irish, possibly Celtic.

We turned sharp to the right up a steep hill, along which the horse tears (*ventre à terre*, as the monsieurs say). "What will you do if we meet a cart?" "No feah foteffah. Shout." Yes, it will be all up but shouting. Bang and bump over ruts and rocks. I get shot half a yard into the air and let with my crupper bone on the rail of the splashboard. X is very anxious, not for himself, but for his precious plates and camera, which he is nursing and shielding as best he can. A sheep gets hurled into the fence. "What is that worth?" I ask, and the man explains, perhaps fifteen shillings, but if the farmer saw us injure it, a great deal more. How curiously these simple peasants reckon! Miles of bad road uphill pass, and the horse is white with foam and steadier. I ask if he will gallop downhill when we return. "No feah foteffah; tired then."

Suddenly we go down a steep bit where there is a stream of water, and, strange to say, a rabbit apparently drinking. Putherutheroo, or something in Welsh, the man blows at the horse, which stops dead, throwing me on to its haunches and the driver into the road, where he makes frantic grabs and shots at the rabbit, which he finally catches and holds up by the hind legs, while with the edge of his other hand he "necks" it in a way that shows he has done that little trick before. "Good in pie" is all he says as he throws it in the bottom of the trap, and on we go again. Presently there is another streamlet with some boggy banks. The horse jibs. "No feah foteffah," says the man as he leads him through, and we cross by stepping-stones and look around us. Hitherto all our attention has been absorbed in keeping our seats. All along, for miles, there has been a great chain of limestone precipices on our right hand.

PLAS UCHAF EGLWYSEG

A few cottages with cade lambs about, and beautiful gushing wells of water look very cheerful in the broiling summer, and "sufficient for the day." The road becomes more like a track, with nuts and blackberries to mark its course, until we come to overhanging trees that nearly sweep us from the trap. As the giant hills close round us, with big white heads rising to the sky, a change comes o'er the spirit of our dream. We feel this must be the end.

A ghostly old black-and-white house, faded and mellowed with age, nestling snugly at the base of the encircling mountains, sheltered with ancient trees, firs, and yews, with masses of hoary lichens on its stone roof, their colours brightened with the wild geraniums and flowers that grow even in the crannies and on the roughness of the big chimney. "Just the place I should like to live at," says X, and hurriedly prepares to photograph.

> "For over all there hung a cloud of fear,
> A sense of mystery the spirit daunted,
> And said as plain as whisper in the ear,
> The place is haunted.
>
> . . . . .
>
> No dog was at the threshold, great or small,
> No pigeon on the roof, no household creature,
> No cat demurely dozing on the wall,
> Not one domestic feature."

There was rather too much of one domestic feature, for the whole side of the house seemed alive with swarms of bees, that had evidently honeycombed the rotting timbers or used the holes in the house for storing honey, and in the hot day were busy and buzzing. It was rather risky to knock at the door, for bees were everywhere, even on the shield of arms, and a sudden attack from several hives would have been dangerous. The motto over the door might seem ominous to those who could read it.

On the gable are the royal arms and MDLXIII., and alter tablets over the doorway give a short list of the

PLAS UCHAF EGLWYSEG

Kings of Wales so far back in the dim ages that no one is likely to contradict them. To all these kings the end seems to be the same—"slain in battle"—for "what can war but endless war still breed?" Here is one: "Roderic the great King of all Wales slain in battle A.D. 877." He was grandson of Nest, the same name as our lady, who was "daughter of Cadell ab Brochwel ab Eliseg King of Powys A.D. 808." Over this misty history is a rampant lion on a shield, with the sun in his strength and the griffin on either side, Pendragon above, and the strange mysterious motto :—

"Ovner na Ovno Angau."
("Fear him who fears not death.")

There is great danger in knocking at many hives of bees, and it seemed long before the door was opened. The caretaker had very little English, and we had less Welsh, so conversation was difficult. We asked if we might photograph, an inquiry that is often misunderstood even when all parties speak English, or think they speak it. X set to work hurriedly, as if the place would vanish or dissolve in mist before he could secure his prize. We took it in front, and in rear from the potato patch where we could almost look down the big chimney, also from the rocks above and around, wherever we could get the tripod to stand in view, and now if the old house is burnt or vanishes in the night, we have good records that in another year, we hope, will with these lines show the English-speaking folk throughout the earth an historic house that has escaped the spoiler, weathered the storms of centuries, and is only made more charming by the history and the wear of the ages that are gone.

Then as the glorious sunlight lessened with the close of day, we turned again to the house and asked to be shown inside. The busy housewife whom we may here call Nesta did not seem to like foreigners who could only talk their foreign talk, and who asked all sorts of

PLAS UCHAF EGLWYSEG

outlandish questions. But she would show us the bed of Prince Llewelyn, and it was worth seeing. A very ancient bedstead, made of massive oaken boards, bound together with ropes, and shaped like a big cradle with a

PLAS UCHAF EGLWYSEG

wooden hood over the head. I have slept in one something like it that was in the boys' bedroom at Standon Hall, but this is far older or rougher, and more primitive. There were also famous pictures, for this house was the home of Colonel Jones, brother-in-law of Oliver Cromwell, whose portrait by Lely was here recently but was

PLAS UCHAF EGLWYSEG

deemed much too valuable to be left. Another portrait by the same artist is of Cromwell's mother, and her last words rose in my mind as I saw it. She was ninety-four and dying when her son the Protector was sent for, and him, one of the strongest men of all time, she blessed, calling on the Lord to comfort him in all his troubles, "My dear son, I leave my heart with thee. Good-night." It seems incredible to read what was done to the old body by the savage Jingoes of the time, and Pepys records the meeting of the still smoking limbs of Colonel Jones in London's streets. Another picture, probably French, seemed to me a very fine one; it is of an old man aged eighty-three, and is dated 1628.

There is an oaken staircase, oaken rafters, oaken panelling. Chairs that were made to last for ages, not to sell. Weapons of war, trophies of the chase, but where are the instruments of music, for this should have been a place for the inspiration of the bards? Its glamour steals over us as the daylight dies. The diamond-paned windows are deeply set, the trees above cast greyish flickering shadows on the walls, while the giant hills encircle and look down on all. It is indeed a ghostly place. Does the fair Nesta come again to see the home of her captivity? Does reckless Owen moan for the delusive joys he ne'er shall have again? Who sleeps in Llewelyn's bed? He was said to be the eagle who never slept; "the Devastator of England," the roar of whose coming was as the waves on the shore, whose red helm and long red lance towered above men in the day of battle. Cromwell's mother haunts me now in broad daylight; her eyes follow me round the room; and that other hoary head, who is he? Hush; what is that mysterious humming sound all around us and up above? Is it the wind? or some lost spirit's moan, or swarms of bees in drowsy hum? In whispering tones X tells me this is just the place where he would like to live and die and to be buried in the mountains—his life-

long dream. Can we sleep here to-night, or any time, or have tea with Nesta? How good that honey would be if we could get it fresh from one side of the wall as the bees brought it in at the other. But the living Nesta objects, and we must dream elsewhere.

Downstairs, in the kitchen, where we get milk, is her household God, warranted to keep ghosts away, Gladstone reading the lessons in church. If some poor wandering spirit came by him, how he would confound it with quotations from the early fathers, or pour such a torrent of eloquence over it that it would shrivel up and silently fade away. There is a path up the mountain where there is a stone that we should see, and Nesta will escort us. Actively she skips over boulders or bramble. The little stream gets less and less, and a tiny pool by the yard of the house might be a store pool for trout, as the water is "fairly stiff" with them. A little higher up and a very big fish will be soon left dry. I ask Nesta if she ever tickles any. "Tkl," she clucks, "what that?" She did not know the meaning of the word, though she may have often done the deed. The path needs climbing, amid the trees and bracken, and darkness is coming dense in the woods; but here is a modern stone which tells us that traditions say, up this path Owen, son of Cadogan, son of Breddyn ab Cynvyn, King of North Wales and Powys, led his men to war when he burned Pembroke Castle and carried away Nesta, the wife of Gerald de Windsor, and in 1116 was slain heading his men against seven to one. This last bit differs from my former tale, but tales will vary in much less than eight hundred years.

Slowly and sadly we turn to go, for the sun is sinking and the shades of night creep up the mountain sides. What a romantic spot it is with its thousand years of history! Legends may be more or less mythical, but to-day the place might be the home of a captive princess dropt out of fairyland, and how strange that the

portraits of the Cromwells should have rested here secure. We drove downhill in the twilight, with the precipices of the Eglwyseg rocks on our left hand for miles, and on our right was open country stretching to the glories of the setting sun. In the gathering gloom I could have fancied that our way was paved with the bones of the English dead, but perhaps it was only strewn with the waste paper that the latest comers had left behind them. We tried to talk with our charioteer, who, when cautioned not to let the horse get its head down if he were going to gallop downhill, said as before, "No feah foteffah; him stiff and tired now." So we got back to the town in the dark, and when X tipped the driver it was evident they were both very thankful the journey was safely over. At the hotel they told us we could have anything we liked for supper, but when I ordered oatmeal porridge they seemed shocked. There had been a table-d'hôte dinner—we could have anything or everything, they said: "cotelettes d'agneau aux concombres," alias lamb chops and cucumber. Oh!——

Then we sat out in the garden by the river in the dark, and I asked X which of the families of the fair Nesta he had come from, and what was the good of coming from any of those breeds. X said it wasn't his fault; he couldn't help it. She was a beautiful woman, and they did not trouble about marriage in those days. Besides, her King's son was made a duke, and that would cover anything, even a multitude of sins. Perhaps X's pedigree will get back to Noah some day now that he is becoming mixed up with the semi-mythical heroes and gods of Wales. If he does, he will be the first Englishman of my acquaintance to surpass our ex-Mayor who descended from the Evangelist.

The hotel folks did not like us to sleep in the garden, so we had to go to sultry bedrooms, but not to sleep, for the long hot day with its hard work and pleasure had been too much for us, and under my window women

VALLE CRUCIS ABBEY

and cats and policemen talked all night till the milk came round in the morning. We would have given anything to have slept with the ghosts at Eglwyseg.

The next day was hotter than ever. We lost no time in journeying to that famous shrine whither so many pilgrims have gone before, the abbey of the Vale of the Cross. It would be retelling an oft-told tale to write much of Valle Crucis. We found it locked up and no one there. A notice on the grand entrance told us to ring the bell and to pay sixpence if we had a camera. But we nearly broke the bell and no one came. So, after a careful inspection of the walls and fences, we left our bicycles, set up the camera, and I climbed the wall, pulled up the camera, and X followed. There was no big dog, so we photographed in peace. A peaceful and lovely place it is. We could have slept anywhere there comfortably. The reflection in the monk's pool came exquisitely. The Madonna lilies were among the finest I have ever seen. In simple loveliness there are few, if any, flowers to compare with them, and in the abbey garden they thrive well, mingled with splendid roses.

What fish there were, too, in that monk's pool! In the abbey well was a big trout that partly hid under a stone, leaving his tail outside which he gently waved for us to shake hands with. We had a drink of that cold water, and were told afterwards that if the reverend caretaker had been at home he would have charged us twopence a cup for it, which would not be like the hospitalities of the monks of old whom he probably pities. We thought of leaving the sixpence for photographing in the well, but some one might have wondered if the trout had done it and had any more. As at Eglwyseg, there were many hives of bees in the walls of the ruins, and flowers in profusion. The abbey as a whole, with its perfect environment, is one of the finest of those finest spots of our matchless land that the Cistercians seemed always to choose with an unerring eye for beauty, luxuriance, and calm.

VALLE CRUCIS ABBEY

We journeyed on to find the famous pillar which is said to be one of the oldest in the land, but the heat was so great that we wanted cider, and in a wayside inn we got it like nectar on draught. Then we were very uncertain where to go next— to continue on the road to Ruthin, or to double back and cross the Dee by the chain bridge at Berwyn and take the train for home at Corwen. We did the latter, and had a charming ride on a good road in magnificent scenery. There were nearly two miles of walking uphill, but it was almost all under the shade of trees with fine glimpses up the valley of the Dee. A long roll downhill and past Owen Glyndwr's Mount for miles took us to Corwen, where we stayed for food and rest. As usually happens at big hotels, they had no cider on draught, but brought us some purple stuff in a soda-water bottle which had never been near an apple, and they told us that it was excellent. Then we went to the station and found it crowded with ministers travelling for the morrow, it being then Saturday afternoon. They were all dressed in black, with cuffs and creaky shoes, looking exceedingly respectable, as if they had been reared in hill-farms on black puddings and oatcake, and were all crammed with long discourses on the backslidings of the unregenerate.

CANADIAN GANDER

# ALBRIGHT HUSSEY—PRESTON GUBBALS—MYDDLE—MORETON CORBET

WHAT a nice lot of names the above are! Even in themselves they are interesting to the philologist and connoisseur, for they show the varied tribes and tongues that form our English race and speech. Then to see the places, rich in all the romance of history, rich in the luxuriance of a fertile land, and teeming with the traditions of our fathers, one wonders how our plodding Lancashire folk can spend their sad holidays at Blackpool, or Douglas, or on the barren hills of Derbyshire, or think they can die happy if they can retire to be buried alive at Southport.

At Albright Hussey is an historical house, one of the very few which has looked down on the fratricidal strife of the Wars of the Roses, and the nearer and greater conflict of King and Parliament, which still stands serene and picturesque, of many styles of architecture, of varied materials, and of many colours. We saw it from the railway as we neared Shrewsbury. It was beyond the famous battlefield, the scene of Shakspere's greatest historical play and Hotspur's death. Of the battlefield we have written before, and on this day's pilgrimage we kept more to the west, on the road to Ellesmere, until in a few miles we came to gigantic oaks on either side a gate, where beyond and across the fields this curious old house was plainly seen. The way to it is over a fine stone bridge, with carved head on archway, which crosses a stone-lined moat. On the right hand is a

farmstead partly made of enormous blocks of stone from some much older building, with a sundial on the wall, while on the left is a mounting block, and doorway with tremendous lintel stone to the garden by the moat.

The house itself is most irregular and mixed in everything. The entrance is very ancient, overhanging, timber-built. To the right is a gigantic chimney-stack in brick, of six chimneys, and beyond is the stone-built keep with stone-mullioned windows of more recent date. Inside there are enormous beams of oak strong enough to carry a castle, a staircase evidently built for defence, rooms of oaken panelling, part of which is fortunately signed and dated, "Edward Huse, 1601." The porch is said to be of the date 1524, and from the window above it one Preece or Scoggan shot Bunny, the tailor of Hadnall, and his horse, in the Civil War. The ownership of the estate had then passed from the Husseys to Pelham Corbet, in whose family it is now vested.

The tenant has not been there long, and has not much knowledge of the place, though he has some good cider. He thinks of setting some of the farm labourers to fettle up the sundial with a bit of rough sandstone when they are short of a job, but we beg of him to let it be. There is a bit of ruin railed round, where clustered columns mark the remnant of a church which has long since been made into cowhouses and cart-sheds, but as long as any of that ruined church remains erect the farm is free from tithe, and if any one wants to go to church there is Battlefield, Bolingbroke's thankoffering; it lies beyond the turnips in the Warfield. Yes, there are bones about, but not enough, the land would do with more. In a curious arbour by the moat, made in a wide-spreading yew, we chat of relics of the war, of landlords, and of pigs.

Through the village of Albrighton, noted for whip-

GATEWAY TO ALBRIGHT HUSSEY

ping a cat to death at Shrove-tide, where the inn sign showed the man whipping the cat and said—

> " The finest pastime under the sun,
> Is whipping the cat at Albrighton,"

we journey on to Preston Gubbals, a beautiful little village with a name that is said to have come from the Saxon priest who founded it, and which you may spell with endless variations. A wide grass bordered lane leads from the highroad, past a spacious farmstead that looks as if it once had been the hall, to where an ancient church is encompassed in the fields and sheltered by its giant trees. A sundial stands before the spreading yew, and down the lane are lovely cottages, black and white, and thatched. All things seem content and calm. The only sounds come from the lowing cows and cackling hens. We rest awhile and long to linger on, but there is more to see than our short lives can see, and laziness must be repressed. Up a long hill we trudge, where sheep and turnips take the place of cows and grass. A team of three good horses plods patiently up with a great load of hay. " Uphill laden and downhill empty," is a common grumble with the farmers whose homes are on the hills, where distant views and breezy winds may please the tourist, but not avail to pay the rent.

Lea Hall is at the top. Then we wind round and down a few miles further to another lost village where there is much to see, for across the fields is the ruined tower of a castle encircled by the waters of its moat, and near it, almost hidden in its stately trees, is another ancient church. As I try to learn the history of the places that we see, I search for any old and local history that may bear in its internal evidence the stamp of truth, but one is hard to find. Of this place, Myddle, or Medle, in Salop, there has been in our Free Reference Library for four-and-twenty years, with most of the leaves uncut, as if few had ever opened it, one of the

ALBRIGHT HUSSEY

most interesting histories it has been my lot to read. Bits of my life, and especially my youth, have always been spent in these primitive country districts, where the thoughts and lives of the countryfolk are as different from those of the townfolk as cheese is from chalk. Here I found a book that, in the cold-blooded language of an old lawyer, laid bare the lives of the villagers, not fifty years ago, but two hundred years ago—the lives and deeds of our semi-barbarous forefathers.

How is it that in those days all men had to attend, and mostly did attend, divine service every Lord's Day in the Parish Church, and yet a large part of them were regularly hanged, or died a violent death, or, if they could, drank themselves into an untimely grave? Nowadays there is only a small percentage of men who attend their parish church, and yet they do not get hanged, and their crime is a very small percentage of what it was. Space will prevent me giving a tithe of the extracts from this book that would be interesting. The quaint phrases, old-fashioned spelling, Latin quotations, and country proverbs, all mixed together, are charming in their way, and full of solid information.

Richard Gough, whose name is probably British, and means "red," inherited a small estate in Myddle from his fathers, he being the sixth son of the name, and was educated under Robert Corbet, a Master in Chancery. He complains that whereas his father had to pay "onely" fourpence a year for the relief of the poor, he had to pay almost twenty shillings. He gives a plan of the church with its pews, and taking them in order, describes all the parishioners who had "kneelings" in them. "A peiw is a certain place in church incompassed with wainscott . . . itt does not beelong to a person or to land butt to an house." Then follows the law and the cases. Rector Kinaston was one of the rare parsons who took his tithe of the children, for when

ALBRIGHT HUSSEY

a poor weaver named Perks had eleven, he took one, reared it, and dowered her. In the time of Civil War even the parson always carried a dagger at his girdle. The Rector's dues were a penny for every garden or milch cow, sixpence from men servants, fourpence from women. One shilling for burying a corpse, but only sixpence if there were no coffin. The clerk also claimed dues from every house for various things. Richard Parker gave a side of bacon to be chosen churchwarden, "and afterwards hee made that yeare the epoch of his computation of all accidents, saying such a thing was done soe many yeares beefore or after the yeare that I was churchwarden."

"John Wareing was an attorney, hee could not write a good hand, nor learne the practical part of the law throwly, yet hee could make large bills, and was not inferior therein to the worst attorneys. Hee maryed money. 'De male quaesitis vix gaudet tertius Heres.'" In the Civil War twenty men from the parish fought for the king, and thirteen were killed. Few went for Parliament, and none of them were killed, but one lamed. Their pay, if they got it, was to be two groats a day. Some of us remember that fourpenny bits were called groats.

Some of the short descriptions of the countryfolk are very amusing, and they are constantly mixed up with proverbs or bits from Horace, Cato, Virgil, &c. "Anne Parkes had the distemper and ricketts. Shee learned to knit stockens and gloves very expert and laboriouse. Had £1 in her coffer when shee dyed which shee said shee kept to pay for her funerall and it may be shee was never worth more all her life. 'Quod tibi divitiae prosunt si pauper abundas.' Cato. George Reve was a criple from his mother's womb (the old proverb says Beware of him whom God hath marked) Hee was apprentice to a shoemaker for one legge was shorter than the other, but Mercury's boone was given to him

MYDDLE CASTLE

that hee should spende a groate beefore hee had gott twopence."

There was an enterprising and numerous family named Jukes. One is described as "a bauling bould person, a great bowler." One of his sons went as footman to the Spanish Ambassador, and a Frenchman ran him "cleare throw" the body with an halberd on Tower Hill. Another Jukes "kept an inne in Myddle, where Newport butchers ly all night with fatt cattell from Oswaldstree fayre. The falsest theife in the parish, one John Owen, who slept in the daytime and walkt about at night was drinking with them there one day until they were gone to bed and the cattell put into the backside where was a delicate pied heifer exceeding fatt. Owen and one of Juke's sons went and caught the heifer and thrust a wyre into her throat soe that she bledde inwardly. When the butchers arose Owen was sitting in the corner at the inne where they left him, but the pyed heifer was dead, beeing soe very fatt, shee had been overdriven and soe dyed. Owen told them poore people would be glad of the meate and he bought her for litle money, and when they were gon, he drest her, and they had a great deale of good beife. Butt the potsherd that goes often to the well, comes broaken att last. Horses were stolen and one killed at pasture . . . and Owen gott hanged."

"Thomas Jukes's wife was from Llanguedwin, shee was a handsome woman but he might have had one as honest nearer home.

> 'Nulla fides Veneri Levis est interque planetas
> Ponitur, haud inter sidera fixa, venus.'

He had three sons and never a good one. Thomas did use to break his neighbor's houses but had the fortune to be catched before he had done mischiefe. His father in drunken humor, sett him apprentice to a Jugler, a very hopeful employment. Hee onely gave with him an old pettycoate of his wife's for the Jugler's wife. Richard was one of the falsest theives in the country, hee

did lye in goale for stealeing horses. Vincent was nimble and went to be a seaman, was taken prisoner by the Turks where hee changed his religion (if hee had any before) and beecame Turk with another they escaped roveing in a small vessell with onely eight Turks who they fastened downe hatches then hoisted up saile for England and sold the vessell. Vincent bought new cloaths and a good horse and came to Myddle where they sang ballads of the adventure."

Another family named Elks all got hanged. "A bayliffe went to arest one Clarke for arearages of rent, but young Clarke with a turfe spade or peate iron cloave out his brains. Hee that spills man's blood by man shall his blood be spilt, soe Hopkin cast a stone at Clarke (when this thing seemed forgotten) and killed him. Vengeance suffered him not long to live, for one Lyth killed Hopkin with the foote of a washing-stocke. 'Sua quemque vericordia ledit.'"

The Crosse family seem typical of many others. "Hee and his wife were both overmuch addicted to drunkennesse and it is noe marvell that they consumed the marriage portion and afterwards the lands. Hee sold his lands at Yorton and went to Billmarsh where hee and his wife went dayly to the alehouse, and soone after the cows went thither alsoe." Then follow more Latin quotations. Nathaniell Reve borrowed money to buy land but was soon taken to gaol for debt, for "to buy land and borrow all the money that pays for it is such a precipitate thing that hardly prospers. 'Canis festinans cæcos parit catulos.'" (The dog in a hurry brings forth blind puppies). Preece or Scoggan who shot the man at Albright Hussey got his second name for swaggering about a boar he had killed which had bristles like "pikeeaveall" grains (that word shows the origin of our common word "pikel"), got safely through all the wars and three wives, and lived in a cave called Goblin's hole. "Hee that sits on the ground can fall no lower. Soe hee dyed in peace."

Here are two bits that I do not understand. One man "packed up St. Hughe's boanes and ran his country." Another cried "Roast" and his landlord packed him off. Another was such "a notoryouse lyer that hee was scarce believed in anything hee spoake." Unfortunately he left children to continue the breed. Tyler lived more by cheating than by his trade, "butt hee could not cheate Death for hee dyed of a feaver." There is a strange account of him being arrested at church. John Aston was very idle and much given to stealing poultry, "but when catched they only cojaled him." Mary Gittins was "comely but crooked of boddy, modest and religiouse, but dyed unmarried." "Richard Gough gott a distemper called the Scurvey, hee tooke several medicines, butt all his teeth dropped out." "Hall fell lame and att the charge of the parish was putt to a chirurgeon (surgeon) who cutt off one of his leggs and cured him."

With one more quotation from these blunt unsparing records I must reluctantly leave them. A gentleman's servant holding water for her master to wash, "hee cast a litle water from off his finger into her face, which her mistress saw and thinking that was too famillier shee tooke up the cleaver and gave her such a blow that shee dyed. 'Audita tantum loquor.'" More Latin about "a sow gelter who escaped from goale and was light fingered. If a man steal all his life how can he forbear in his old age?' 'Quo semel est,'" &c. from Horace. Even Chaucer is brought in about rotten apples.

We spent a happy hour at Myddle. The ruined castle is surrounded by a moat and the little island is all grown over with potatoes. At the neighbouring farmstead they are building a new "goose-crew" with large blocks of red sandstone, each stone a yard long. All the buildings are of extraordinary strength, the stone being obtained near by. By the fine church tower are enormous trees with fertile undulating country all around. We go due east up a steep hill past stately halls by

MORETON CORBET

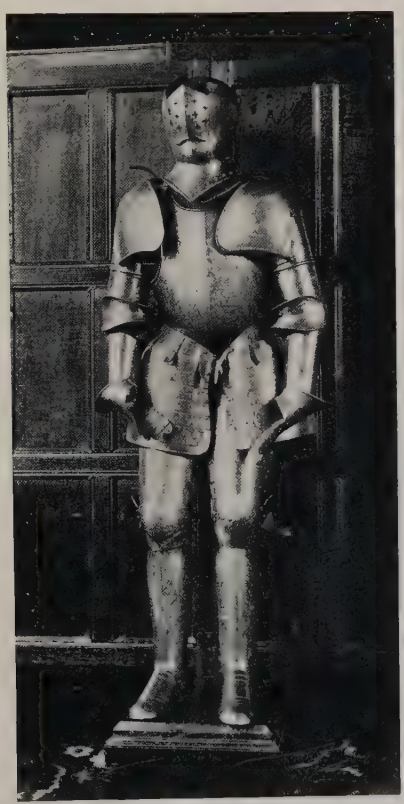
Yorton, with the lofty spire of Clive on the left hand, and by winding, twisting lanes we find the beautiful village of Grinshill, where at the "Elephant and Castle" we have tea, forgetting all about the church, until our time is swiftly fleeing away. In most picturesque

MORETON CORBET

scenery we gradually come to the strange and striking ruins of Moreton Corbet. Here are castles and houses of four dates and ages, all in ruins together, the last and stateliest never finished, gaunt and roofless grandeur, cursed and left deserted for the pigeons, owls, and bats. Robert Corbet, who began "the most gorgeous and stately house after the Italian modell," in 1606 died of the plague. In 1644 the Puritans twice plundered it, "slewe tenne, tooke Sixe Loads of Iron," and finally burnt it.

Near by are parish church and parsonage in black and white, with well-kept lawns and rare and stately trees. The tombs of the Corbets are dazzling and resplendent in their blazonry, twenty-five quarterings of arms proudly leading up to a vile king and a bastard baby. Gorgeous effigies upheld by painted images, angels and shields galore. A careful old parson comes in to see what I am doing. He proudly shows me the perfect squint or hagioscope, the splashes of leaden bullets on the outer walls, and an inscription, dated 1577, which will well fit in to end this tedious tale:—

"Arumnarum Requies Mors."
(The labourer's rest is Death.)



# THE HOME OF THE HEREFORDS

WHEN in the heat of August fine weather seemed assured, we ventured farther forth, taking a few things with us, and leaving our usual train at Ludlow, we turned southwards, or away from home, instead of northwards or towards home. As we wended slowly up the steep street of the quaint medieval town, and then gazed down that terrible hill on the other side where the ancient gatehouse blocks the way, through whose narrow portal we must carefully pass, and then go down again steeper and steeper to the narrow bridge over the rushing river far below, it seemed as if we were facing another world whose glories we could never see, work as we would, for our little lives are far too short to find a tithe of what is worth the seeing.

Few could pass over that ancient bridge at Ludford without lingering in the recesses of its three 'fayre" arches to see the foaming river down below, and the high-pitched woods above on one side, and, on the other, the high-pitched town, crowned with the stately tower of the church, which was founded by the Confessor when the pilgrims of Ludlow brought him the ring from St. John; and dominated by the ruined fortress-palace where for centuries kings and princes and nobles lived and fought and drank and died, and many notable things were done. Here *Comus* first was acted, and now that ruins and princes are all crumbling to dust, the music of the words of *Comus* bids fair to outlast them all. When John Egerton, Earl of Bridgewater, was ap-

LUDLOW CASTLE

pointed Lord President of Wales, with official residence at Ludlow Castle, his children journeying to meet him there were benighted in the great forest which rises above a thousand feet to the south of Ludlow. They may have been lost or misled by drunken guides. This was the origin of the play. For at a grand festival given by the Earl on the opening of his court there were theatricals, or a "maske" as it was then called, wherein his children acted their parts, and a youthful poet named John Milton was employed to write the words, some of which are here given, copied from the first edition in black letter. Milton laid the scene in the neighbouring forest, and Comus, a son of

> "Bacchus that first from out the purple Grape
> Crusht the sweet poyson of mis-used Wine
>
> . . . . .
>
> Offring to every wearie Travailer
> His orient liquor in a Chrystall glasse
> Which most doe tast through fond intemperate thirst,"

when they become as goats or swine in sensual stye. He tempts the Lady Alice Egerton, but her brothers beat him off, though they cannot break the spell of the sorcerer until Sabrina rises from the river where she was sitting on the rocks sleeking her alluring locks, and with the water nymphs chases away the evil.

> "Some say no evill thing that walks by night
> In fog, or fire, by lake, or moorish fen,
> Blew meager hag, or stubborne unlayd ghost
> Has hurtfull power ore true birginity.
> Doe yee beleeve me."

As we trudged up the long hill of this forest and rested awhile on a projecting bluff which overlooked the castle, I recognised the picture Turner painted for Sir Egerton Brydge's edition of Milton, which I read as a boy. The full moon rises in a cloudy sky behind the dark castle, whose banqueting hall is ablaze with light.

LUDLOW CASTLE

Far down below is the narrow bridge, and from the wooded river beauteous nymphs with fairy lights are rising. It must be classic ground where Turner painted and where Milton's sonorous music rolled. Memories of it and of his own youth must long have lingered in the mind of Milton and been revived in *L'Allegro* when he wrote of

> "Pomp and feast and revelry,
> With mask and antique pageantry,
> Such sights as youthful poets dream
> On summer eves by haunted stream."

We are neither of us poets nor very youthful, but we sometimes dream even when we ought to be minding our work. Then comes the effort to waken and the trudging on again. Our way is all uphill and lonely till we see a female all forlorn reclining on the grass. We take her for a gentle shepherdess, and ask the way to Wigmore. She has evidently met with Comus and been tempted :—

> "This will cure all streight; one sip of this
> Will bathe the drooping spirits in delight
> Beyond the blisse of dreams. Be wise, and tast."

She told us we were going far astray; our path was the easy one down below, and she had lost her husband and was waiting there for him. X always believes a woman and would turn again, but to me the luscious liquor of Comus's baneful cup merely smelt of vulgar gin, and I thought her husband, poor man, had run away or was hiding in the forest. We turned again, but shortly met another gentle shepherd, who said that we were right before; the woman had beguiled us, as some folks say the women do. We trudged uphill again, it seemed for miles, and as we rested on the very top there came a grocer's cart, and when I asked the driver if he could say where lived one Mr. Tudge, he answered with another question: "Is it him as sent the champion bull to Chicago?" I answered "Yes" unhesitatingly, yet with-

WHERE THE BULL DRINKS

out knowledge. Straight on again, miles of downhill now, rolling through a lovely country where the vegetation with the cottages and the wooded hills have changed again. Hops seem growing wild, clinging to telegraph poles or over hedgerow tops. A tiny church with Norman arch, over curiously sculptured lamb and cross, close by the wayside, suddenly pulls us up for

GOLD-BOX

another short inspection. The place is one of the many called Aston or east-town ; but we must hurry on, and shortly find ourselves at Leinthall, the home of Mr. William Tudge, where once I slept some score of years ago.

My former visit had been to buy some of the noted Hereford cattle to keep at Didsbury. Now it was to see them again and the country which was their home. Could we photograph some good specimens ? or what would a bull say to a camera ? Mr. Tudge assured us his bulls were perfect gentlemen, as quiet as lambs,

A CHAMPION HERD

and would be quite pleased to be photographed. They were quieter than lambs, for a ton of beef would not jump about as easily as a lamb, but if they want to go through a gate, they go through—which means that their great strength sends the bars and splinters of a shut gate flying, a rare sight for townfolk to see. We were told to get between the bull and the pond, and take him as he came to drink. But what was to happen to X and his camera while he was focussing if the bull were thirsty? He might tread on our corns if we had any, but he stood like a colossal monument, immovable, was photographed, and then the camera was turned round to take the pond where he drank, which was against the back door of the herdsman's cottage, where the slops were emptied, and the ducks swam, and the children dabbled, all huddled up with the bull, most beautifully picturesque, and fortunately far from any sanitary inspector.

The tale of the Chicago bull was somewhat as follows: In 1893 there was to be held at Chicago the biggest show on earth, with biggest prizes for the best bulls on earth. Not quantity this time, but quality. Not a thousand beasts a minute all put into tin cans, and nothing lost but the tune they died of. The finest beast on earth, where could it be gotten? There came an enterprising Yankee with almighty dollars in his pocket to this little farm in North Herefordshire, and he bought a bull named Ancient Briton, which he took away with him, probably in a first-class saloon, feeding him on strawberries and cream, or pearls dissolved, like the famed and fabled Queen of Egypt or some other withered thing took to preserve their fading beauty. The bull stood his long journey to Chicago well and won. *Finis coronat opus.* Every Yankee when he saw the British bull with the appropriate name of Ancient Briton win, solemnly spat, turned over the almighty dollar in his breeches pocket, and resumed his chewing.

THE WAY INTO WEOBLEY

In the next year this bull won the championship and the first prize for all breeds and all ages at the great show at Illinois. He was also the champion at the State fairs of Iowa, Nebraska, Wisconsin, Sioux City, St. Louis, and others. A wonderfully good record for Ancient Briton, bred as he was in these lone woods and hills, where the thistles grow in the rich grass, and the hops trail over the big hedgerows, and the apples gleam with scarlet and the pears with gold, a little farm that would not be a speck on the prairies where the countless millions graze, but where cattle are reared and beef is fed of quality beyond compare. The good soil and climate of Herefordshire must always have fed good cattle, but the now famous and distinctive breed of white-faces originated in a herd of Flemish cattle imported from Dunkirk by the Lord Scudamore of Holme Lacy, who had lost all his cattle in the Civil War. This herd had the big red bodies and white heads we still see in the old paintings by Cuyp and other Dutch or Flemish artists. They were mixed with the native breeds and gradually spread over the county. A Mr. Tomkins, of a numerous family about Weobley, in his will dated 1720, left a special bequest to his boy Benjamin of a cow called Silver and her calf. The naming of a cow in the will was very unusual in those days, but the progeny appear to have been treasured, for Ben's son Ben became a noted breeder of cattle, and always kept his "Silver" strain. Nearly a hundred years after the grandfather's death a picture was painted of a Silver cow with the now well-known colour and markings, and another picture shows Ben Tomkins as a shrewd and careful-looking old man in long coat with big buttons, knee-breeches, shaven face with long hair, some of his massive cattle behind him, which he was very certain were better than any one else's, and in the far distance is "Malvern's lonely height."

The Hereford breed has now spread over the world.

WEOBLEY

No other can stand the rigours of the winters where once the countless herds of buffaloes roamed as well as they. Lung disease and milk fever are unknown. Give them plenty to eat and they thrive in cold or wet, and regularly breed to a great age. In Cheshire a cow is counted old that has had four or five calves, but Mr. Tudge showed us one with massive head and wide-spreading horns that had had sixteen and expected another. The Herefords are more picturesque than any cattle unless it be the shaggy Highlanders. Their hair is curly, rich red in colour, with white heads and feet, and white on chine and brisket. Their broad backs have a greater proportion of best beef on sirloin and ribs, which some say was caused by their having been long bred for plowing. Milton noticed this when he wrote in *Comus* of

"The starre that bids the Shepheard fold

. . . . . .

What time the labour'd Oxe
In his loose traces from the furrow came,
And the swink't hedger at his supper sate."

"Swink't hedger" sounds old-fashioned. I have heard our old folks use the word "swink't" for tired. We were often swinkt and wanted supper, tea, or sleep, but had to wander on. As Comus said when he tempted weary pilgrims with his baneful drink—

"What hath night to doe with sleepe?"

From Leinthall a mile or two of country lanes takes us to the picturesque village of Wigmore. Here the quaint black-and-white houses are scattered up and down banks and round corners in charming irregularity, with an ancient church on a steep little hill, all encompassed by venerable trees. The big weathercock on the tower has lost its tail, with the hinder part of its body, and we find the church door locked. So it seemed to me the warning cock still showed which way the wind blew, for

WEOBLEY

if the church had been properly kept it would have been open, and he would have had his tail mended.

There is a very high-pitched roof and ancient porch of carved oak, a cross up many steps, in one of which is chiselled out an ambry or recess like a tiny dog-kennel. But the shade of the trees was so dense that we could not photograph, and my hurried notes and sketch are badly worn. The once famous castle of the Mortimers is near by on Offa's Dyke, but it is up a steeply-wooded hill that was made ages before bicycles were heard of, and our time and strength had to be husbanded, so we climbed not the hill, and missed the guest-house of the old monastery with its open-timbered roof, which is now a farmhouse, and (as we were afterwards told) an oak with mistletoe growing on it. We rushed away to Mortimer's Cross, one of the battlefields in the Wars of the Roses.

According to Shakspere it was here that the three sons of the Duke of York, two of whom became kings of England, saw three suns all shining in the sky at the same time, and thinking this grand display was done in their honour, the three suns of York were chosen to be the cognisance on their shield. In this age of agnosticism it would seem more likely that the young men were all drunk than that the firmament of heaven should be so upset for their petty quarrels. But if we doubt history, where are we to stop in our scepticism?

There is a long inscription on a big stone about the battle, which we could not wait awhile to read, but other histories say the fight lasted all day until the dark. The brilliant young warrior who was to be King Edward the Fourth showed his usual skill, stubbornness, and unscrupulousness. There was little or no quarter in his wars. All the other side were to be killed as quickly as possible, and by any possible means. Owen Tudor, who brought the Welsh blood into the royal family, with eight lords or leaders were taken to Here-

WEOBLEY—THE TOMKINS' HOUSE

ford to be publicly beheaded for a warning to others. "Off with his head" was in those days soon said and done.

We journey on to Weobley, the most picturesque little town we have yet seen, and I have not heard of one in this or any other land that would surpass it as a beautiful specimen of the little country town of our forefathers. It is an ideal place for a lazy photographer who would like nice easy subjects all around him. He could set up his camera and tripod in the wide grass-grown street, where, if any traffic comes, it will idly pass him by; and turning north and south, east and west, there are black-and-white houses of all sorts and ages that have not moved for centuries, and will long outlast his little life. High aloft there towers a glorious spire which seems to soar to the clouds above the lowly thatched cottages around The tower is detached from the church, and it has curious decorated and blocked-up windows on three sides. In our hurry we missed seeing the erect statue of Colonel Birch, of the Parliamentarian Army, whom I had shortly noticed when writing of Didsbury and our local history. We were really feeling faint for tea. The day had been very hot and our journey long. X took most excellent photographs while tea was brewing at the Red Lion, the old house spoilt with dirty plaster that is shown at the fork of the roads.

Weobley was noted for its ale in those days when even common folks brewed their own with malt and hops, but as no one offered us any we had to reflect that perhaps the alehouses are tied for beer made from glucose. There are many inns, for this little town sent two members to Parliament in its palmy days, and if four candidates with all their followers spouted frothy politics and drained deep draughts of Weobley ale, where abuse was stronger than argument and eggs were kept for elections, what a lively little cockpit there must have been! Fancy any far-seeing visionary Free Trader

THE LEY

advocating the repeal of the Corn Laws—sudden death would be imminent Disestablishment, under the shadow of that soaring spire, would seem as sacrilegious or iniquitous as an increased duty on hops.

There is a room in Weobley where tradition says the first commandment of "Be fruitful and multiply" was zealously obeyed, for thirty-two little Tomkinses were born to one family in one room. Some accounts say there were thirty-three of the little dears, so perhaps they were not particular to an odd one or two. What a superabundance of bliss for the fond and happy parents, and when the children in due time began to be fruitful and multiply, how the brothers and sisters would get mixed with the uncles and aunts! Where did they all go to? They would soon overflow this little town. Perhaps their emigration would be another grievance for the politicians.

Any one who would love to see a cluster of curious old-fashioned houses should visit Weobley before they die, and if they have an artistic soul and would seek out a venerable hall called The Ley, which stands in the fields about a mile away, they will cry to think they never saw it before and never knew there was such a charming home. It seems all gables and projections. From irregular gables there project other gables, and windows stand forth from them with frames and mullions of oak, unvarnished, defying wind and weather. Over the door is the shield of arms and an inscription which, after much deciphering, tells that J. B. built it in the name of the Lord in 1589, but as "indei" is in one line, "nomi" in the next, and "n 1589 E" in the next, it is as hard to read as a doctor's prescription. The "J. B." stands for John Brugge or Bridge, one of whose forebears fell at Agincourt. Whoever he was who conceived or built or dwelt in this old home, let us hope that he lived long to enjoy the fruit of his labours. The desperate haste and energy with which X unpacked his

THE LEY

THE LEY

camera showed that he quickly appreciated its beauties, and the guinea-fowls flocked together and raised their heads in chorus of "Come back, come back," their evening hymn, as the setting sun was sinking behind the lofty trees which cast their flickering shadows on the many nooks and crevices, by window sills or barge boards, where the pigeons were roosting for the night.

# CLIFFORD CASTLE—ABBEY DORE—KILPECK

ANOTHER day of heat and splendour found us journeying on pilgrimage to an historic spot that X had long and eagerly desired to see, for in an ancient castle on the Wye's romantic banks was born the famous beauty known as Fair Rosamund, whose sad fate every English school-child bewails and pities, and X has lugged her into his pedigree and mourns for her whenever he thinks of her. Her father was Walter de Clifford, who built his famous castle on the cliff by the ford of the Wye, and there was born his daughter Rosa-mundi (the rose of the world) whom the King, Henry the Second, honoured in the royal fashion and hid her in a maze at Woodstock. But that jealous old scrat Queen Eleanor "tyed a thredde or clewe of silke to the King's foot" and so found her out, pulled faces at her, and frightened her into fits with a big bowl of poison and a nasty dagger. "Soe shee dyed and was closed in lede and withyn that in ledder"—probably perfumed leather, as "a sweete smell came owt of it"—and was buried in the "quire." But another bishop had her dug up, for he said nuns should be chaste, and of course the Queen could do no wrong.

The crumbling ruins of Clifford Castle that "echoed once with princely revelry" crown a steep crag far aloft above the Wye. There is little of its former grandeur left but the magnificent view, hills beyond hills fertile to their tops, corn-fields white unto harvest, gleaming orchards, herds of Herefords standing knee-deep in

CLIFFORD CASTLE ON THE WYE

the rushing river far below us (see illustration, page 129) all aglow with the rich light and luxurious calm of autumn. It was an entrancing scene and like the devil I went to X tempting him and saying, "All these things canst thou have for a few years' profits of that shop in Manchester." But he was overcome with its solemn beauty, and sadly answered, "What I have is not mine own; it is merely held in trust and not for long."

Somewhere in the woods across the river is another temptation, an inn beloved by artists and anglers. It has outside stairs, a deep timber-built porch, with a room above nearly half the size of the house, and there we may have good cheer. It is called Rhyd Spence. The ferry boat has worn away, so we must go a long way round. We ask for cider, and the hostess tells us it is threepence a quart, but if we could spend fivepence she has some super-excellent. We say, "Blow the expense! Why hoard riches which take to themselves wings and flee away?" She brings a big fivepennorth, and as the jug is set on the table, down flops into it a lively wasp. Then others come and tumble into the liquor and swim about excitedly. She tells us that shows the goodness of the cider, but we must not hit at them or they will sting. We say, "How can we drink wasps? Let us sit in the shade of that roomy porch where the air is free and balmy, by the sound of the rippling river and the fragrance of the flowers. There we may rest and be happy."

Suddenly there was a sound of buzzing in the air, the rush of hosts innumerable, for countless wasps were telegraphing with wireless telegraphy all over the woods and hills, "Here are pilgrims from afar indulging in the most expensive cider; come unbidden to the feast and sup your fill." The venomous beasts descended in swarms, cohorts, battalions, gleaming in sable and gold. With them came horrible hornets, each one as big as many wasps, big enough to drink out of the jug or to

CLIFFORD CASTLE ON THE WYE

take a piece out of the back of one's neck, and sit on a rail or a chair back while they ate it.

Again we turned and fled, crying, "Missus, have you any dark room without wasps?" A country bumpkin is sitting down to dinner and chumping big hunches of cold bacon and cheese. She gave him a mug of cider which he teems all down his throat at once, never giving the wasps a chance, and then sets down the empty mug with a sigh of intense thankfulness and bliss unfeigned that is a treat to see and hear. If some firms in our country had him they would make his skin into brown boots. Could he do with another mug of cider? It might add to the polish or deepen the bloom on that "burnt sienna" skin. X is muttering charms to drive away the wasps, and when I ask him for his dark words, and the meaning of them, in pity of my ignorance he quotes the wisdom of a great seer and the interpretation thereof:—

"'Entbehren sollst du, sollst entbehren:'
Das ist der ewige Gesang,
Den unser ganzes Leben lang
Uns heisser jede Stunde singt."

('Thou shalt go without, shalt go without:'
That is the everlasting song,
Which our whole life long
Hoarsely every hour sings.)

From the swarms of venomous wasps and horrible hornets at that charming inn by the rushing Wye we retraced our way from Rhyd Spence to Clifford, and, missing the church, we were sent uphill—a climb of 400 feet—to the little village of Dorstoné, where there is an ancient camp, and a still more ancient cromlech known as Arthur's Stone. These relics were higher up the hill, so we left them alone in their glory, and were content to see a very curious sun-dial that is affixed slantwise on the top of what appears to be the column of an ancient cross standing on a hillock or rocky space

RHYD SPENCE INN

in the centre of the village. Perhaps this was the original place of folk-mote, where the folk met in primitive times to discuss their politics and scandals before there were newspapers to enlarge on them and to gloat over them. The air up here seems too rare for wasps, but not for children. We sit on the steps of the inn, setting up the camera and sipping cider, careless of mankind, freed from venomous beasts, and surrounded with silent, awe-struck children, who gaze at the conjuring-box, and possibly have secret longings for "the luscious liquor in the crystal glass."

SUN-DIAL, DORSTONE

Southwards we roll from Dorstone, where soon a lofty spire comes in sight, and a fine church, which seems out of all proportion in size and grandeur to the little village which humbly nestles in its shadow. The place, in fact, appears to be called after the church, for it is Peterchurch, and the building looked so painfully new that we nearly passed it by. Fortunately we went in and found many interesting bits. High up in the wall is an old stone tablet sculptured with a big trout, adorned with a golden necklace ending in a ring. There is no one about to tell us its history, so we imagine it to be a miraculous fish from the neighbouring trout stream that probably remembered St. Peter, and was too good to be eaten. The walls are five or six feet thick, with deeply splayed windows, the arches

Norman, with zigzag ornamentation, the font adorned with coil or rope work, and winding stairs of stone lead to the rood-loft. So we congratulated ourselves that we had not hurried past, misjudging the outside spick-and-span appearance of the church.

There is still a long day's work before us, and we cycle down this Golden Valley with the Abbey Dore as the next goal of pilgrimage. The name of Dore is another little bone of contention for the etymologists. Is Dore derived from *d'or*, the Norman for "of gold," or from *Dwr*, the British for "water"? The former derivation seems to be the more popular, but the latter the more correct. The little river rushes by and round the abbey, as it did around its site before the Normans and their gold were heard of. The stream flows on unconscious of the stately buildings which rose and fell, and now are patched and mended like a broken teapot.

ABBEY DORE

An old woman potters about with a slop-pail, and two young ones make limp sketches, scratches on paper without beauty or likeness to aught in art or nature. They were in the precincts once to women forbidden, where the white-robed monks sought for themselves a haven of rest from the storms and follies of life, and here died of melancholy, or tried to end their days in peace and charity.

The eastern end has been restored, and the tran-

septs and chapels encircle the chancel, which is screened off with a massive Jacobean screen and used as the parish church. The clustered pillars and stone vaultings of these encircling chapels are very fine.

At the robbery of the religious houses the vast possessions of Abbey Dore were given to John Scudamore, of Holme Lacy, who undertook to administer to the spiritual needs of the district. It is written that a priest agreed to do this for fifty shillings a year, while the Scudamores pocketed the gold of the golden valley and its rich abbey. But other generations came, and another of the family spent largely in restoring the place as it now is. The stone of the altar, which was twelve feet long, had been used as a slab for the curing of bacon, the salting of swine's flesh. These strange tales are told all over our land wherever the religious houses are in ruins, and the strangest part of the tale is that it was not Turk or Jew who thus defiled the holy places of the Christians, but the Protestants of England who protested so violently, and whose successors lock up their churches and chapels lest some wandering cyclist should steal the hymn-books.

Our next goal is a famous little Norman church at Kilpeck which, though small, is elaborately ornamented, not only round the arches but up their supporting pillars. Our way by the map seems easterly, but we are sent round through places with the queer names of Ewyas Harold and Pontrilas. At the former there is another ancient church with massive tower, timber porch, and well-kept, sleek, and shaven churchyard. At the latter is a large old manor-house at which we have only time to peep, for the light is fading and Kilpeck lies lonely in the fields, rather hard to find. It was worth the search, for round a village green where the geese hiss at our intrusion are the ruins of a castle standing darkly against the sky, one house which may be parsonage or farm, the church which we have come

KILPECK

to see, a cottage or two, and an inn—a nice little open town, not overcrowded.

It is beyond my powers to describe that wonderful doorway to the little church. Slippery serpents climb up and down trees of knowledge or of life. Adam looks scared, and dragons with other monsters are in such an endless tangle that enthusiastic decipherers of symbolism might become confused and driven crazy. Round the eaves of the church are seventy grotesque heads of fiends, some of them with long curling tongues, and if the original devils from which these were copied had tongues anything like as long, they must have been very unpleasant to live with. When the house known as The Towers (afterwards the birthplace of the Ship Canal) was built at Didsbury, a prize was given to the sculptor who made the most hideous gargoyle; but modern imaginations failed to conceive the monstrosities of the good old times, when men heard more of and took more interest in the legions of the devil.

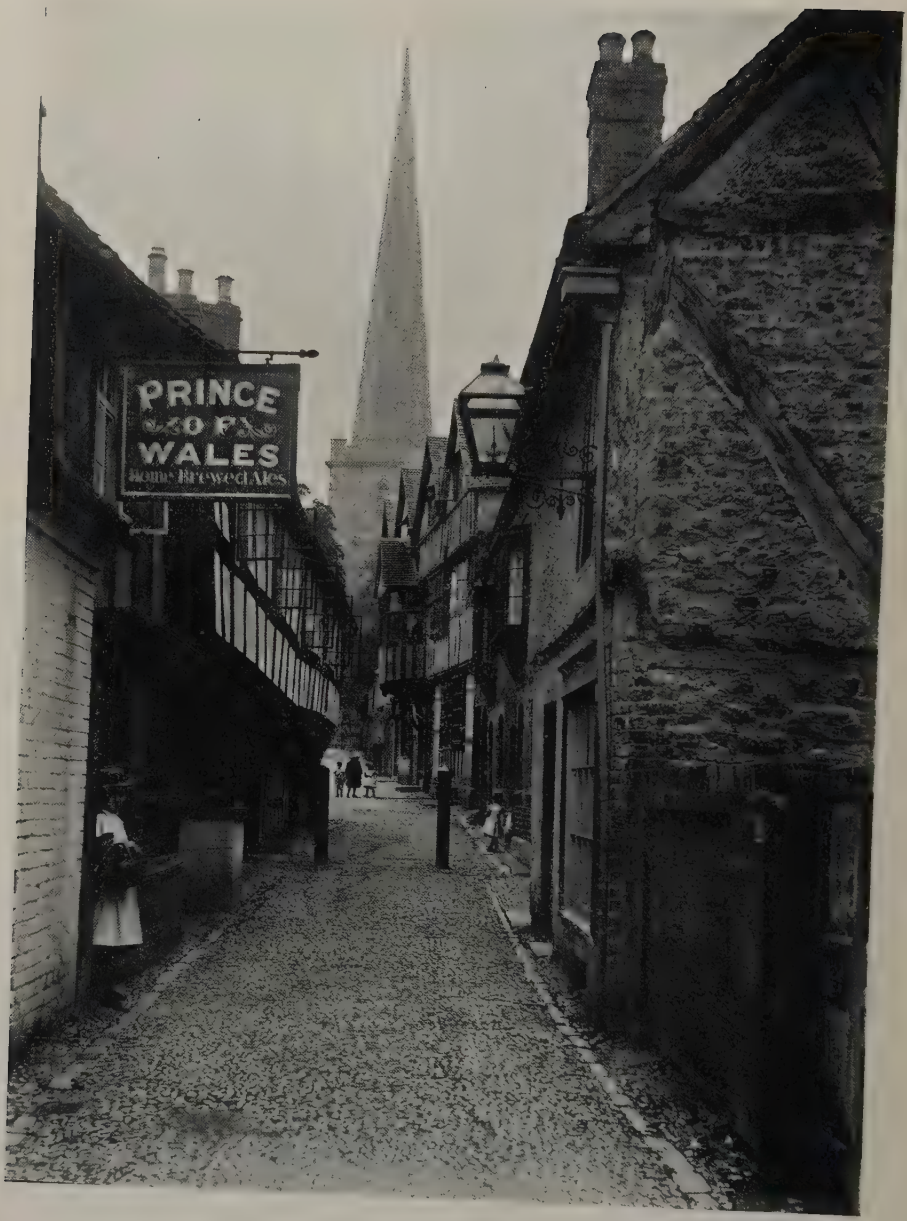
There is a fine old font, and another, ages older, formed of the squat figure of a man cut off at the breast, the lower part of his body forming the basin which his hands and arms enfold. Some one connected with this little, though long forgotten, church must once have had a lively fancy and indulged himself in art. The age of this curious font is doubtful, though probably some wiseacre of a reviewer would fix it up exactly, and say the style shows that the work was done on the first of April in the seventh year of King John.

It was almost dark when the photograph of the doorway was done, and it was quite impossible to take anything inside the church, therefore the font and beautiful arches of the interior had to be left. How the fine work about the door ever "came out" is a mystery, for thick darkness soon enfolded all the country round.

## LEDBURY—MUCH MARCLE

THE next morning found us at Ledbury, quite an important town in that district, for there were donkey-carts with merchandise and fox-hound puppies playing in the street. The sight of those mischievous young hounds reminded me that a pack was named after the town. The market-hall is one of those picturesque old market-steds reared aloft on columns of wood and framed of timber, but in this case the sixteen supporting columns are not of oak, but of the edible or Spanish chestnut that were grown on Malvern Chace. Behind the market-hall a very narrow lane leads to an enormous church of many styles and ages. There is much to interest, from the ancient squint to the bullets in the door, the relics of the inevitable fights with Prince Rupert, but perhaps the reader is tired of churches. We ask our way to Much Marcle where they make much cider, and as we have lately developed such a thirst for cider it is as well to know where to get it pure and good for another day.

At a farm called the Bounds, another form of the word March or Marcle, which is on the boundary of Gloucestershire, we find immense vats and presses with all modern machinery for the making of apples into cider and pears into perry. Several vats hold five thousand gallons in each, and some are covered with sand or gravel on straw which keeps the contents practically air-tight and yet allows the gases caused by fermentation to escape. Of course we had to sample various blends and brews of liquor, until we felt like Manchester buyers




LEDBURY

LEDBURY MARKET-HALL

usually feel when they are having a good time. After all, the genuine fruit was the best, and to see scores of acres of it, in many cases with the trees broken down with the weight of the crop, was again very interesting to one who has tried at Didsbury to grow every sort of apple that was worth the growing. We cannot grow them with anything like the rich colour they have in Herefordshire, nothing to compare to it. Perhaps the best of all apples is the Blenheim Orange. There it is orange and scarlet; with us it is a dull dirty green. Coxey's Orange colours better than it does with us, and King of the Pippins better still. These are noted best fruit, but they are small and dull compared to the cart-loads of gorgeous fruit in Herefordshire. Their cider apples were quite unknown to me The famous Fox-whelp we were told was practically extinct, merely a name to talk about. Royal Wilding and Kingston Black were favourites, splendid to look at, but worse than the fabled apples which turn to dust and ashes in the mouth, for they would break the teeth and take the skin off the lips of those who rashly tried to eat them.

From Much Marcle we are directed to Preston Court, where there is a fine specimen of the black and white hall having six gables on one side, the remnant of a moat, and a nice little chapel in the farmyard, all in apple-pie order. The master is from home, so we cannot learn anything about the place, and we travel on for Hereford through miles of hop-yards where in places there are enormous screens bordering the roads and fields to screen the precious crop from blighting winds.

This was another day of difficulty as regards our tea. The superior critic may scoff, as critics have scoffed before, at our troubles to get tea, but nothing can justify the fact that we cycled for many miles, calling at every public-house we came to and asking to be supplied with tea, and at every house we were refused. At a grand hotel under the sign of some aristocratic arms an impressive female

PRESTON COURT

almost withered us with the scorn with which she refused our modest request, and then condescendingly said we might have soda-water. I was afraid X in his thirst would have taken it, but even he rebelled, and fortunately we soon came to a drinking-fountain by the spacious park of the Foleys, where cricket was being played on half a mile of greensward which gently sloped to the wooded hills beyond. This aristocratic neighbourhood is named Stoke Edith, but it was we who wanted stoking, and no Edith as a ministering angel came. We struggled on to Hereford station, where we had tea, and X went by the north express, leaving me to spend the next day (Sunday) alone in Hereford and its Cathedral.

PRESTON COURT

# HEREFORD

SUNDAY morning is the quietest time of the week in most places, but especially in a hotel where doors bang and customers cough and servants tramp till far past midnight. To lie in bed and rest is the religious observance most religiously observed by many until the church bells or the pangs of hunger rouse them. To me it seemed a pity to miss the fresh air of the morning, and when eight o'clock came, and the quietude was unbroken, I let myself out into the empty streets of the cathedral city, and in slippers wandered forth to find the Red Coat Hospital in Widemarsh Street, where "ancient servitors clad in ginger fustian" recall the times and manners long since gone. Under an ancient archway I found one of those charming courts like the Hospital of the Trinity at Clum, which might be hundreds of miles and hundreds of years from the hurrying, gloomy, grimy Lancashire of to-day, where the sunlight vainly struggles with the fog and smoke, and the poor are crowded one above another on the tainted land.

On the ruins of a hospital which had once been stolen from the Knights Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem, one Sir Thomas Coningsby erected this Home of Rest for worn-out soldiers and servants. The founder's badge of conies (or rabbits) is graven on the stones of the walls. The motto he chose for the men was in Spanish, meaning "Be soldiers—doers, not talkers"; and their costume was rather fantastic, little remaining of it now but the long red coat in which they

go to church or festival. The quaint old houses prop one another up around a tiny yard, where a venerable stone pump is in the middle, with beds of brilliant flowers by the walks, and creepers up the time-worn walls and lichen-covered tiles of the roof; all mouldering in long-enduring calm decay. The tottering inmates cling to life with a tenacity that is helped and fostered by the homes and associations in which they live. Modern sanitary inspectors would condemn the court, and be shocked at the pump. Modern councils would never allow such artistic homes to be built: so we must be thankful that some of the legacies left by our half-civilised forefathers have escaped the spoiler, and were made before councillors, medical officers, surveyors, inspectors, officials, *et hoc genus omne*, were called into existence to strut and fret their little hour on the stage of public life. If we had an ideal Home of Rest in Manchester—and up Shudehill on Mayes's land there once was an attempt at one—the reformer, the economist, and the fool would all agree in agitating for the site to be sold, and shops and offices to be erected, in endless, wearisome, horrible monotony.

In the garden through the court there stands an ornate pulpit, where clustered columns and open arches of sculptured stone support a groined roof, from under which the brotherhood of the Franciscan friars were wont to preach. Round about are the ruined walls of their home, mantled with masses of ivy, and under the sod are they buried where the poor of to-day plant their potatoes and grow cauliflowers and kidney beans. For the site of the monastery is now used as allotment gardens, and having had as much to do with workmen's gardens as most men, I tarried and talked to learn how much they were appreciated. One old man dug up his potatoes, then peeled them, and carefully dropped each one, as soon as it was peeled, into a saucepan of water just drawn from the pump, so that all should be fresh.

HEREFORD

Mindful of where they had come from, I asked him if there was much body in the potatoes, but he wisely answered, "They'll be rare and good." As nine o'clock struck I went back to the hotel in search of boots and

OPEN-AIR PULPIT

breakfast, looking on my way for the ancient gatehouse. All that I could see was a modern building with a tailor's sign advertising those abominations called cheap clothes, but inside it there is still said to be an old stone fireplace with this good inscription : —

> "When you sytte by ye fyre to keepe yr selves warme,
> Take heede leaste yr tongues doe yr nayboures noe harme.'

THE RED COAT HOSPITAL

Ten o'clock, or soon after, found me on the way to the cathedral, round which I had once been escorted with our local antiquarian society, but now I wandered alone amid the many monuments to bygone bishops, wondering whence came the names of Lorraine, Vere, Acquablanca, and others. Effigies of a coloured man and his wife, and another of John the Baptist, attracted my attention; also a tomb all overrun with little pigs carrying straws in their mouth. It is a sign of bad weather when pigs carry straw for bedding, but these were not alive. They were beautifully sculptured on the stone, and I learnt afterwards that they were meant to be boars with rue, the cognisance of the name of Borewe. As the congregation slowly gathered I asked the verger for a seat, although I lacked that emblem of respectability, a top hat, and he showed me to a place in the front under the central tower, where in faded clothes, with cap in pocket, and boots on which patches of hotel blacking overlapped flakes of dried dust, I was set before the congregation as an awful example of what a man might be reduced to by much cycling. Females were not allowed on the same side of the church as males, as they so greatly outnumbered them, and proximity might interfere with devotion.

A tottering old man came and bowed to the altar before he took his seat, then a long procession filed in of choristers and priests, with a verger escorting the rearguard with a beautiful little silver mace. These ancient maces were the emblems of authority of the peaceful powers, from the times when even bishops went to war, and being averse to shedding Christian blood by vulgar swords or spears, they knocked their foes on the head with a mace, which did for them quite as well and saved the consistency of the profession.

As our time had been lately passed among the products of the country where the cattle are bred and reared, and the fruits of the earth, the hops and apples,

are chosen and grown for their especial work and use, I could not help wondering whether the men and youths in this fine procession had inherited special characteristics for their work, or as a farmer would say, "Are they bred for the job?"

The first lesson told us of a ruler of men who rashly went to war, but the dogs soon licked his blood as it was washed off his chariot and armour. It seemed as if retribution came sooner in those days, and possibly some peaceful antiquary now treasures the armour, totally oblivious of him who treasured it, used it, and died in it. The second lesson told us of the folly and wickedness of going to law, but what is to be done when the other fellow will do it? Possibly there were not so many lawyers in those days all striving to justify their existence. Folk-lore tells us that one lawyer in a community may starve, but when others come they thrive. Then came the beautiful prayers of the litany wherein we pray "in all our troubles and adversities, that those evils which the craft and subtilty of the devil or man worketh against us be brought to nought." The sermon was as usual the weak part of the performance. A missionary was to have preached, but as he had not come the collection would not be given to the mission, which seemed rather of the earth, earthy.

The men about me soon fell asleep, while I admired the architecture and dreamed of those who conceived it and who wrought it. Before me was a metal rood screen, gorgeous in gilt and blazing in colour, but lacking the venerable simplicity of carved oak, whose edges and corners are smoothed with time. On either hand are transepts, Norman and Early English, the massive arches of the former rising one above another to the vaulted roof. Did Norman minstrels ever dream of the music that would echo round their work for ages after they were dust? They never heard "the pealing organ." or "the anthem clear." Their chants and songs were of

battle, to rouse their men to war. though they built what should be temples of peace where nought is now heard but the English tongue which they despised, while they and their works are nearly forgotten.

At the celebration of the sacrament it seemed to me that some of the priests and people more nearly prostrated themselves than I had ever seen before. Other times, other manners ; one form of ritual more or less ornate follows another and verts and reverts back again. After three hours all was over for a time, and I went out into the hot and dazzling sunlight uncertain what to do or where to go, until I strolled into the neighbouring castle grounds which are now a park or garden, bordered by the Wye, with open country round, and there under the shade of a spreading tree I thankfully rested after the hard work of the week, and dreamed again.

The morning broke with a gale from the south, which rushed me northwards on my way for home. Little time was there to notice anything but the gusts of wind and rain. Far on the right Malvern's "lonely height" stood out dark blue in colour, clear and sharp against the horizon. Gradually I neared the great rise of Dinmore Hill, up which I had to plod sheltering beneath the overhanging woods. Under a spreading oak was a trickling fountain, where I rested listening to the pattering of the raindrops in the silence of the forest, for all other sounds seemed to be hushed.

At Leominster I sheltered again, first in an inn then in the church. Some folks would wonder at any one leaving the warmth and cosiness of the inn for the empty desolate church, but the Priory Church is a fine and interesting one, a vast building of all sorts of architecture. In one half are the massive round pillars and the handsome doorway of the Normans ; in the other are large and lofty windows all encrusted with ball-flower ornament. A perfect ducking stool is treasured within the church, from which in living memory a daughter of

Eve, with the lovely name of Jenny Pipes, was roughly ducked in the river for talking too fast, or out of her turn, or some other of the common sins of women. There was a monastery as long ago as the days of the Saxons. It struggled through centuries of fear and molestation from the wild Welsh who were its neighbours, until at last that bloated Welshman King Henry Eighth robbed it thoroughly and hanged the prior at his own gate for daring to object to the goods of the charity being stolen for the enrichment of the vile.

In the Bargate are some of the almshouses, which seem to be a common appanage of the towns in this district. These have been rebuilt as ugly as any churchwarden could admire. The old inscription does remain, and it seems to convey some of the wisdom of this world, founded on experience. It is under the figure of a man whose shirt and clothes are missing, but who otherwise is dressed in a cocked hat and hatchet :—

> " He who gives away all before he's dead,
> Let 'em take this hatchet and knock him on ye head."

HEREFORDS

A.D. 1902

# LUDFORD HALL—RICHARDS CASTLE —ORLETON COURT

IN the winter of 1901–2 we had decided that one of our earliest pilgrimages in the coming summer should be to photograph that banqueting hall in Ludlow Castle where *Comus* first was played, and to visit some more of the old-fashioned homes in the delightful country of the borderland of Wales.

To Ludlow we travelled again by the usual express in wild wet weather, but as we left the train at noon the clouds cleared away with brilliant light. Leaving our bicycles in the ruins of the spacious outer court of the castle, we entered the noble arched inner gateway, on which was a notice saying "admission was not free." I asked the janitor, "How much for two amateurs and one camera?" He replied, "Eightpence," and giving him a shilling, he began to tell us what we might not photograph, carefully forgetting the change. As he never mentioned the Banqueting Hall, which we wanted, or the celebrated round church, which is said to be one of the best and earliest of the five round churches in England, we took those first, and then I went for another dark slide to our bicycles, telling the man at the door what I wanted. He sharply told me that if I went through the door I should have to pay another fourpence, so we argued the matter, as our bicycles were in the courtyard of the castle. He stuck to his text, whereupon I asked him for the change out of the shilling given when we had entered. He said that was given to him; he should keep it. My reply was, "No one ever said they gave it to you," and as he went on chattering

THE BANQUETING HALL, LUDLOW CASTLE

I asked him if his name was Pugh or Taffy, or what was it? For I remembered the chairman of one of our banks who had bought an estate near here telling me that those half-breeds on the border would do him while he watched them, so there would be small chance for me, and it was evident that this man would sooner part with his teeth than money, and also objected to giving

LUDLOW CASTLE AND ROUND CHURCH

his name. After further discussion he prudently thought it better to let me through.

X was quietly enjoying himself focussing for something this custodian had chattered about without authority, but we had got what we wanted, and after taking two more photographs, which also turned out well, we left to prowl around this quaint and picturesque town of Ludlow, whose history is the early and mediæval history of England. As we have visited the place and mentioned it before, it will suffice now to say we found the ancient grammar school, which is figured in Green's "History of the English People" as being built in the

THE READER'S HOUSE, LUDLOW

fourteenth century by the Palmer's Gild, one of the oldest buildings in England. It is not very picturesque, but the Reader's House, with its several storeys projecting over the narrow way by the east window of the church, is good, and the Castle-keeper's house, of stone below and timber above, is curious. We were afterwards told that the panelling from the round church is in the Bull Inn. That may be doubtful, but if we had known at the time it would have been an excuse for wanting cider.

Down that terrible hill and through the narrow gateway we cross the Teme to stay a little longer this time, and find the church and house here built at Ludford by the Knights Hospitallers, and dedicated to St. Giles, the patron saint of beggars, wanderers, or pilgrims. Church and hall are close to the road and river, and we might have missed them again if I had not seen a notice board in what appeared to be a private garden, and going slowly up the drive a pleasant girl came and asked if I would like to see the church, for if so she would get the key. I went for X and told him I thought the girl was pretty, but could not be sure of it without him. He is an authority on such matters, and told me she was charming with her good manners

The tiny church might hold fifty people if some sat on the monuments and others under the yew tree, where they might be trespassing in the garden of the hall, for church and house are only a few feet apart, having been built in the semi-fortified manner of the military and religious orders. The porch of the house is of heavy recessed arched stone below, and timber above, the building rambling, and of many styles. We asked our young friend if we could see the house, but she said, "Oh no, the family is from home, and the butler is very strict indeed." She seemed afraid of our even looking at the house, and when I said we would go round the lawn and chance the butler, she blushed and hid her face

in her hands as if she had a vision of a violent butler with a round of beef carving-knife.

The view from the flower-garden-churchyard over the almshouses of St. Giles, each with its garden plot, the black and white inn, the picturesque mill, and tumbling tanneries by the river, all dominated by the steep hill of Ludlow crowned with castle and church, is singularly fine, but time is always flying, and we have to travel on.

LUDFORD HALL

For this journey we take the road directly south, which is not often used, as it is much more hilly than the newer road, which diverges to the left. Up and down we go, and winding round between two parks we tire of walking, and take a seat under gigantic trees of oak and ash and fir, whose boughs spread across the road, while on the other side is open forest full of birch and bracken and bunnies. Here we rest and moralise, wondering at those perspiring people packed on the platform at Crewe like herrings in a barrel, all longing

to get to Belle Vue or to buy something cheap in Market Street; while here in this balmy air there has not been a wheel mark or a footprint on the road since the morning's rain.

> "It was noon, and on flowers that languished around,
> In silence reposed the voluptuous bee;
> Every leaf was at rest, and we heard not a sound,
> But the woodpecker tapping the hollow beech tree."

There are many woodpeckers about this district, but there is rather too much poetic licence about "the voluptuous bee." The other poet who wrote—

> "How doth the little busy bee
> Delight to bark and bite,"

is nearer to the popular experience. I never sit on a bee's nest or ant's without remembering an old tale of my father's which he had had from his father. When "the Ranters" first came into their country one of them got on to an ant-hill to preach, that he might be better heard by his congregation, but after he had fidgetted about for some time he suddenly cried, "Oh, brethren, though the Word of God is in my mouth the Devil is in my breeches!"

At Richards Castle we are advised to leave our bikes at the inn and climb up to the castle while tea is being made, and a pretty stiff climb we found it. There is nothing whatever of the castle left above ground, only a steep hill with a deserted church, two or three cottages, and a mound all overgrown with nettles and brushwood. Inside the rather fine old church there are traceried windows with bits of old glass, panelling, and oaken pews. It is a wonder they are left. The powers that be must have been more than usually conscientious, for if it had escaped the perils of parsons and churchwardens there is an Incorporated Society that gives £100 for repewing churches if they can take out the old oak and put nice new pine in its stead, which is rather profitable to those who know their way about.

ORLETON COURT

Richards Castle, of which it may be said the name alone remains, was one of the very few castles dating from before the Norman Conquest. It was a natural fortress in one of the loveliest bits of our favoured land. As we came down that steep hill, where miles of rich country were before us, all bathed in a wonderfully clear light, it seemed as if we could indeed count the cattle in a thousand fields; and of "the stately homes of England, amid their tall ancestral trees," there seemed to be no end.

Rolling downhill and southward still, at an inn named the Maidenhead, we turned to the left and shortly went splash through a brook, past a very picturesque, tottering, timber-built barn, to the little village of Orleton, where is one of those charming houses that is a delight to see.

In a garden well stocked with flowers, roses, and old-fashioned posies, there is a black-and-white creeper-clad house, with upper windows far projecting over door or summer-house; while on the other side the lawn slopes down to the fields, and they to the brook, beyond which stretches some of that fair landscape we gazed on from the heights of Richards Castle. Inside, the house is all in keeping; the chamber with five-sided bay of latticed panes projecting o'er the garden, is where the poet Pope endured his courting, and perhaps if he had lived here longer his verses might have been more cheerful. We are told it was Miss Blount he came to see, and the Blounts still own the place. We are also told King Charles fled here after Worcester fight, but from Blount's Boscobel Tracts we know he never rested till he was at Whiteladies, which is much farther north; but the historian may have come from here, and his concluding words showed his adoration of his King, for he humbly kissed the pen and paper which had the honour to be servants of his Sacred Majesty.

Over the big fireplace in the large panelled bedroom is a cross with the pious motto, "Honner Him in Hart

ORLETON COURT

that Souffered on the Crosse for them as worship Him," and in the panelling is fixed one of those handsome carved bed-heads that are still found sometimes in these old houses. The floors and stairs are all of slippery dark oak, and on a great long oaken table is a cannon ball which was found embedded in the wall, so probably some little unrecorded skirmish here took place.

Just a short scramble up the big chimney in the hall and there is a hiding-hole, where refugees might have a warm time while their pursuers were vainly hunting for their human prey. Outside the wall, and near by, we nearly tumbled down some steep stone steps that were hidden by the luxuriant growth of the beautiful lemon-coloured corydalis. On the tennis lawn a turkey-hen has nine fledged turkey poults, and a black hen yellow fluffy Cochin chickens. It is another of the homes of England we are kindly shown round, and still the wonder grows, how unnumbered and how beautiful they are "o'er all the pleasant land."

"The free, fair homes of England!
Long, long, in hut and hall,
May hearts of native proof be reared
To guard each hallowed wall!"

GREY LAG GANDER WITH COMMON GOOSE AND YOUNG

# LEMSTER—EARDISLAND—BOSBURY—DORMINGTON

ON arriving at Hereford this summer our first business was to photograph the Red-Coat Hospital, that I had found in the preceding autumn when left alone wandering about the city in slippers early on the Sunday morning. The "ancient servitors, clad in ginger fustian," made haste to get into their red coats when they found their pictures were going to be taken. Corporal Williams, the commanding officer, was helpless without his missus, for his hands were as delicate as a child's, excepting for the knobs and swollen joints. We thought his white hair would take better than the red coat which he was anxious to struggle into. The latter was stiff enough to outwear dozens of its temporary tenants. He is shown in the centre of the picture, page 147.

One step from the modern street, through the old stone archway into the creeper-clad court, with its quaint pump in the centre, its birds in cages, and cats, the pets of the inmates, would charm many who never heard of this Home of Rest. Beyond, again, are the allotment gardens and the renovated preaching cross, a relic of other days and manners.

Then, with a peep at the bishop's palace and garden, we go down that narrow, steep Pipe Lane, where Nell Gwyn was born. Pretty, witty Nelly Gwyn! if "the Merry Monarch" could care for any one perhaps he cared for her; and, if she did any wrong, her grandson was a bishop and that would make it right. On one

of the few signs in the lane is the name of Carless, the name of the man who was up in the oak with the King. Names of streets and names of men conjure up the memories of history. Garrick's birthplace we had passed.

We returned to Lemster to note that curious old house, the Grange, which was once the Market-Hall, and has fortunately been preserved as a private house, when so many of the fine old timber-built public halls are gone. Under the projections above the first storey of this one is the following inscription in compartments. The last lines may be read in the photograph. Where it is in Latin, a translation is given.

| | |
|---|---|
| Vive Deo gratus. | Live grateful to God. |
| Toti mundo tumulatus. | To all the world buried. |
| Crimini mundatus. | Free from reproach. |
| Semper transire paratus. | Always ready to go. |
| Where Justice rule. | |
| There vertu flow. | |
| Vive ut post vivas. | Live that thou mayest live after. |
| Sat cito si sat bene. | Quickly enough if well enough. |
| Like collummes doo upprop. | |
| The Fabrik of a building. | |
| So noble Gentri doo support. | |
| The Honor of a Kingdom. | |
| In memoria aeterna. | In eternal memory. |
| Erit Justus. 1633. | The just shall be. |

Fancy putting up that humbug about noble gentry in a market-place, where every one should be encouraged to make the best bread and butter they could make, see the eggs were fairly fresh, and pay promptly. It reminds me of the old lines :

> "Let wealth and commerce, laws and learning die,
> But leave us still our old nobility."

We have to hurry past the beautiful Priory Church and seek the open country, for in the neighbourhood is Eardisland, which we have been told is the prettiest

village in England, and is near to Weobley, which is the prettiest we have seen. We have to dodge the showers and shelter, and linger over lunch, where bread and cheese and butter are all good. X says I am too much of a connoisseur in those simple articles of food, but they are the staff of life, and good home-made is none too plentiful anywhere. Here they are all good, and we enjoy them, helping ourselves. Then comes

THE RED-COAT HOSPITAL

the settling. "Would you think threepence too much, and threepence for a quart of cider?" Oh these unsophisticated rustics! If we could earn sixpence a day here we could live on it. Or we could get as drunk as lords on sixpence. But we refrain, and go out to photograph in the wet, when X spends as much in plates in half-an-hour as would keep him a week.

Eardisland is a pretty, uncommon-looking village. There are two streams of water, probably a mill dam and the river Arrow. Two roads are close to the

water, with connecting bridges over. The most conspicuous building is of brick, the top of it an old-fashioned dovecot, the bottom perhaps a granary. There is a sleepy mill, a church beyond an orchard, with black and white houses in all sorts of attitudes and levels. The church is one of the spoilt ones. A notice board rather proudly tells us that a society gave £100 towards repewing it. If the society took all the old oak away for which this country is so famous and put the rubbishy pine in its stead, it would easily get its £100 back, and more to boot.

The Staick or Stake House is a very beautiful, nicely-kept little place, with big yews formally clipt into peacocks aloft. The quaint little garden looks as if it had once been a courtyard, for three sides of it are bounded by the house, one gable of which projects over the road, where the river rushes by, and the mistress is feeding young wild ducks. She kindly shows us over the place. In the roof, at a part she calls the chapel, are immense timbers shaped in trefoils and cinquefoils. It is pleasant to see these old houses with their corresponding furniture so reverently used and evidently enjoyed. The little wild ducks rush about the shallow water catching flies with great glee. A brood of ducklings dabbling in the mud always seems to me to be one of the happiest things on earth. Cats may be on the bank waiting to eat them, rats hiding in their holes ready for them, pike in the deep waters to grab them from below, and man or fair woman feeding them fat, all hungering for the little ducks, who, unconscious of their fate, enjoy their short and merry life.

Bosbury is another picturesque and tranquil village that is well worth the finding. The church is fine, with a strong tower some yards from it, which in the days of border warfare was evidently a tower of refuge. There is a gatehouse, a large timber porch, an ancient cross that was spared by the Puritans when the rector inscribed it,

LEMSTER GRANGE

"Honor not the † but honor God for Christ." The Crown Inn is one of the sights of Bosbury. Here Prince Rupert is said to have stayed when on his rush for Worcester, but all the houses in this country have had some one staying in them. What concerns us more now is that the room is panelled and furnished with oak, from oaken floor to oaken bosses in the ceiling, carved with

EARDISLAND

the arms of Scrope, Wrottesley, and other historic names. In the big fireplace are queer old Dutch tiles, and over it is an elaborately carved mantelpiece. The house is dated 1571. Princes, bishops, and lords have here set their mark or arms and lorded it in very great style for their little hour, but beer has bought them all up, for brewers have bought the seats of the mighty, and any one who has three-halfpence to spend may drink their beer sitting under the arms of the bishops, while their reverences are utterly forgotten.

EARDISLAND

We hurry on to find a farmhouse which artists have described as perhaps the most picturesque in the world. It is written Fern Farm, but it should be The Vern. The lanes to it are steep and stony tracks. Then we have to cross fields and orchards in long wet grass, push through thickets of thistles, go astray in all sorts of ways, and finally get horrified, for sanitary authorities have

THE STAICK HOUSE

evidently been before us and marked the place for melancholy and their own. The thatched roof is hidden with corrugated iron, the finely carved overhanging gable is also covered with the galvanised abortion. Parts are newly bricked, and iron is painted brick colour, the dovecot is gone, the dairy looks like a butcher's shambles. Even our bikes seemed to shudder, and with damp feet and heavy hearts we sadly turned away.

Near to it at Munsley is a Saxon church, one of the oldest in the country, but X was so afraid of another disenchantment that he positively refused to risk it, as he

THE STAICK HOUSE

might have been made ill for weeks. There was one of the biggest oaks in England by the roadside, but even for that we had not heart or light to photograph.

Our luck varied, as time and chance happen to all. To me this pilgrimage was about the most interesting I have ever had, and to explain that it will be necessary to make a digression. The hobby that I have most persistently followed all my life has been to keep game-fowls. Fifty years ago it was a common sight to see a game-cock, and poultry shows were unknown. The show had been the cockpit. Now the fine old-game-fowl is almost extinct, and there are dozens of "varieties" of things for show that are all feathers, or legs, or comb and wattles, or something you cannot eat; but which are supposed to lay eggs all the year round, nice cool white eggs in summer, and warm chocolate-coloured ones in winter. The original of them all (excepting the Cochin or Bramah breeds) has been "improved" out of existence, for the wild ancestor is the *Gallus Bankiva*, or jungle-fowl of India, which is a small specimen of the old-English black-breasted-red game, the handsomest, healthiest, and best of all fowls.

At Standon Hall, where they lived in freedom, roosting in the trees or open sheds, my uncle was very careful of them during his long life. It was there the curious old custom to give the first pancake on Shrove Tuesday to the game-cocks. For several years I have had great difficulty in getting any fresh "blood" into the stock. The modern show fowl are no use; the pitcocks, or those bred for fighting, are bred solely for fighting, and were also unsatisfactory; and this last winter, being almost in despair of ever getting any more real old-game, I looked up my poultry accounts, and found that about ten years since I had sent nearly all my stock to a gentleman in Herefordshire, who had kept all he liked, at half a guinea each, and returned all he did not like. I wrote to him, and he sent me

BOSBURY CHURCH

two most beautiful cocks at once, with an invitation to his place. We found Dormington Court on the map, called there, and it was a surprise and delight to me to see the real old game-fowl virtually wild in the hop-yards, as if they were jungle-fowl in the jungles of India.

The hop-yards or hop-gardens are immense fields wherein the hops are grown in long rows of almost end-

less vista. The soil is well cultivated, and very high hedges or orchards are grown for shelter to the precious crop. This soil soon fascinated me, for it was stickier than any I had ever gone across. Lumps of reddish-brown tenacious loam, as rich as treacle after the rain, stuck to one's feet till they seemed as big as one's head. X and I have often discussed the relative merits of boots and shoes. He always wears the latter, while I wear the former. To-day he had to take a seat while we went down the rows, for his shoes and stockings

would soon have been sucked from his feet and grown into hops, perchance to be made into beer some day.

We were told the hops were not "kind," as the weather had been so dark and damp, and fly increased on them. As my guide kept whistling for his fowls, and none came, we went sluthering on, nothing to see but sky and hops and sticky soil. At last a well-known clucking sound faintly answered, and as we neared a shelter-screen I heard a cock talking to his hens. Into the ride or headland one or two stepped daintily forth, and stood about shyly, like pheasants expecting to be fed. Then others came, most of them the right sort, though some were of the shades of colour known as wheaten and ginger, but the cock and a few hens were blue duns, a colour that was new to me, though not to anglers who like the feather for fly-fishing. Here on this sheltered and richly-cultivated land the game-fowl rear their young in freedom. Some eggs are gathered, and some fowl are shot. Their feathers have the brilliancy of the pheasant, and their flesh is better. How can I rear any like them, having nothing like their primeval jungle?

GAME-FOWL.

I was hopelessly beaten at my pet hobby; and when at tea our hostess showed us the tablecloth was dated 1806, saying it had been made in her grandmother's days from flax grown and spun on the estate, I wondered at this land of Herefordshire. My mother was proud to say that nearly all the furniture in this house, even the silver and glass, was bought when she was

married. The table and chair on which I write have been in daily use for nearly seventy years; but here was a tablecloth sound and good after nearly a century's wear. Then our host told us that the best hops in the world were grown in that valley of the Frome where we were. A timber merchant had told us that the best oak in the world was grown in Herefordshire or the neighbouring parts of Shropshire. One of our former pilgrimages was to the farm at Leinthall (page 110) not many miles away, from whence the Yankees took the white-faced bull "Ancient Briton" to Chicago; the best bull at many of their "biggest shows on earth," the champion over their millions in their own land. How much better are these real riches than arid reefs of gold or mountains of silver!

It was nearly dark, though midsummer, as I groped my way through the hop-yards in the dense mists of the Frome Valley, pondering over many things, while the bats flittered round, the corncrakes croaked, and a belated cuckoo called.

TOSSPOT ASKING WHAT THERE IS FOR SUPPER

# LLANTHONY ABBEY—GROSMONT—GARWAY

ONCE upon a time, when X was young and short of a job, he walked across England and Wales, going for the sake of euphony from Barmouth to Yarmouth, and being benighted and rather astray in the Black Mountains in Radnorshire, he was very thankful to get lodgings for the night in a lonely inn called Llanthony Abbey. Not knowing that the inn really was part of an old abbey, and it being quite dark when he got there, he was much surprised at being shown into the Abbot's kitchen, where a gnome-like ugly old man constantly scolded a beautiful damsel who was very kind and attentive to X, cooking his supper and escorting him up endless, creepy, winding stairs of stone, to a little dormitory, lighted from the Abbey's ruined nave, where she left him to the owls and bats, feeling rather romantic, but somewhat sad. There were too many ghosts for him to sleep well, and in the morning the old man was crosser and uglier than ever, watching his damsel as a cat watches a mouse, ready to pounce; so X left early, feeling like a monk hungry and bony, regretfully leaving the vale of Llanthony.

Thither we wended on our pilgrimage. This time by iron roads and iron bikes. We left the rails at Pandy, in the south-west corner of Herefordshire, where near to the station is an old manor-house named Allt-yrynys, which we are told is the oldest known home of the Cecils. A little river rushes round it, and on a dead

tree in the stream a sandpiper ducks and whistles. The walls of the house are a yard thick, with grey lichened roof. The chapel is in ruins, the stained glass with emblazoned arms has been taken to the church. There is good panelling and ornamental ceiling, with a secret chamber in the timbers of the roof. It is said that old deeds mention a Welsh knight named Seisyllt, who lived here, and from him descended David Cyssel, who was grandfather to Sir William Cecil, the great statesman to

ALLTYRYNYS

Queen Elizabeth. I looked in Burke's "Peerage" for any confirmation of this tale in the pedigree of the Marquis of Salisbury, but contrary to the usual practice that nobleman restricts his published pedigree to facts, and does not venture beyond the historical statesman.

Close to Alltyrynys is a fine avenue of Scotch firs leading to an old mansion named Trewyn. We circle round its hilly background by a circuitous course, to enter the Vale of Ewyas, a gorge in the Black Mountains, whose dark ridges gradually close in before us. Constantly uphill, though not very steep, our way keeps

LLANTHONY ABBEY AND INN

company at times with a rushing little river called the Avon Honddu, a noted trout stream, for anglers abound here; and in the *Field* about the time was mention of some one taking fifty brace of trout in a day. On these hills the hawthorn is in flower at Midsummer, and the cuckoo has forgotten the flight of time. The roads are worse as we get into the land of the larch, but suddenly we rush downhill, turn a sharp corner, and find ourselves in the Abbey precincts.

A lot of lads are playing football, and as usual, want subscriptions. Whatever can they want money for up here? If they have food and a football, what more can they want? They are wonderfully polite for footballers, and too polite for a Board School education. When we enter the inn or Abbey kitchen all the assembled company, including an absurdly fat postman, rise and salute, remaining standing. Having come from Manchester, and knowing some little of ourselves, we are rather nervous, and wonder why they should respect us. We do not own the place. It is the property of Mr. Savage Landor, who lives in Italy. All the same, we ramble about it as if we owned it, photograph it from all sides, lunch, and regretfully return.

What fine times those monks of Llanthony, who feasted "on pork and polony," must have had, with speckled trout for fast-days, venison or grouse for red-letter days. Even now hens are laying eggs all about the Abbey ruins, and doubtless some of those reverend fathers would not have been afraid of sucking raw eggs. Yet they were not content, for they said they spent their time in singing to the wolves. There is a legend that the House or Priory was founded by a Norman knight who got lost upon the hills when hunting, and like many of his kindred gave what was not his to save his soul. As a penance for sins he owned to, he vowed never to take off his armour. Perhaps it had got rusty and stuck

LLANTHONY ABBEY

fast. I once knew a man in Didsbury, named Gadd, who told me that when once he put a shirt on "I ne'er takes it off again; it stays theer as long as it howds thegither." But I never thought he was a holy man, although as the shirt and he grew together they may have grown holier.

Gently down for miles we roll along that rugged Vale of Ewyas, with the dark red hills alongside, gradually receding farther away as we reach a lower level. Cwmvoy is a curious name on a signpost, and a curious sight is a pair of angler's leggings waving in the wind to dry. As the road mounts again beyond the railway, we catch a glimpse of a long avenue of Scotch firs extending in a picturesque way across a large park, and ending in the far distance with a fine old house. Quickly we unlimber the camera, but the near trees and the distant hall, with its background of hills and the conical peak of Skyrrid, or the Holy Mountain, need different exposures, and the light is dim. The name of the place is a long one, perhaps it matches the owner's pedigree—Llanvihangel-Crucarney Court.

A signpost points our way to Grosmont, evidently a Norman name, and up, up, up we go again, a rise to nine hundred feet. We had not bargained for that long trudge. X consoles us with repeating excellent precepts. "Patient endurance is Godlike," is one of the most frequent. My remark on that is, "Soft words butter no parsnips." Hovering aloft I thought I saw a buzzard, or falcon, but could not identify it, and fell into the fence by the roadside in watching it. At last the turn comes, and we rush down to Grosmont, a straggling village on a steep hillside, where Prince Henry (Shakspere's wild youth) fiercely attacked the men of Owen Glyndwr, killing eight hundred of them and ruining the great Welsh patriot. The castle, which then was burnt, is now with verdure clad, hidden in great

ILLANTHONY ABBEY

trees, with rabbits in the thick green grass. A fine stone chimney rises from it like an obelisk. Across the road is a great cruciform church, fast locked, with even the churchyard gates locked. It looks deserted, melancholy as a prison. Perhaps the bones of the thousand who fell in the fierce slaughter are under it, and some one might take a few. We console ourselves with tea, and cycle down the valley of the Monnow in charming scenery, past Kentchurch Court, where Owen's daughter, Alice Scudamore, lived, and where a tower still bears the name of him who was

> "Not in the roll of common men.
> At whose birth
> The front of heaven was full of fiery shapes:
> The goats ran from the mountains, and the herds
> Were strangely clamorous to the frighted fields."

In a most beautiful undulating country, where the trees are of enormous size and there is every sign of rich luxuriance, we find our way to Garway, or Llangarway, where the Knights Templars once had one of their fortified homes. A curious interesting church has an enormously strong detached tower. It is eight yards square at the base, which seems to have been the size of several church towers in this district. There were no windows near the ground or door. A covered passage connects it with the church, which has a singular Saracenic-looking chancel-arch, a door to rood-loft, a plain and curious font, benches that are four and five inches thick in solid old oak, and a chest that is three yards long, made out of an oak tree that has been simply hollowed out. There is only one house within some fields of the church, the once customary dovecot, and some splendid yews. This dovecot, like all the buildings of these militant churchmen, has been fortified. It is a round stone tower, with a hole at the top for the

LLANVIHANGEL-CRUCARNEY COURT

pigeons, and no other aperture whatever but a small arched doorway for entrance. There used to be a cross over this doorway, and an inscription saying it was built by Brother Richard in 1326. There were 606 nests inside, with a circular revolving ladder to get to them. At present it is used as a hen-pen. The live stock

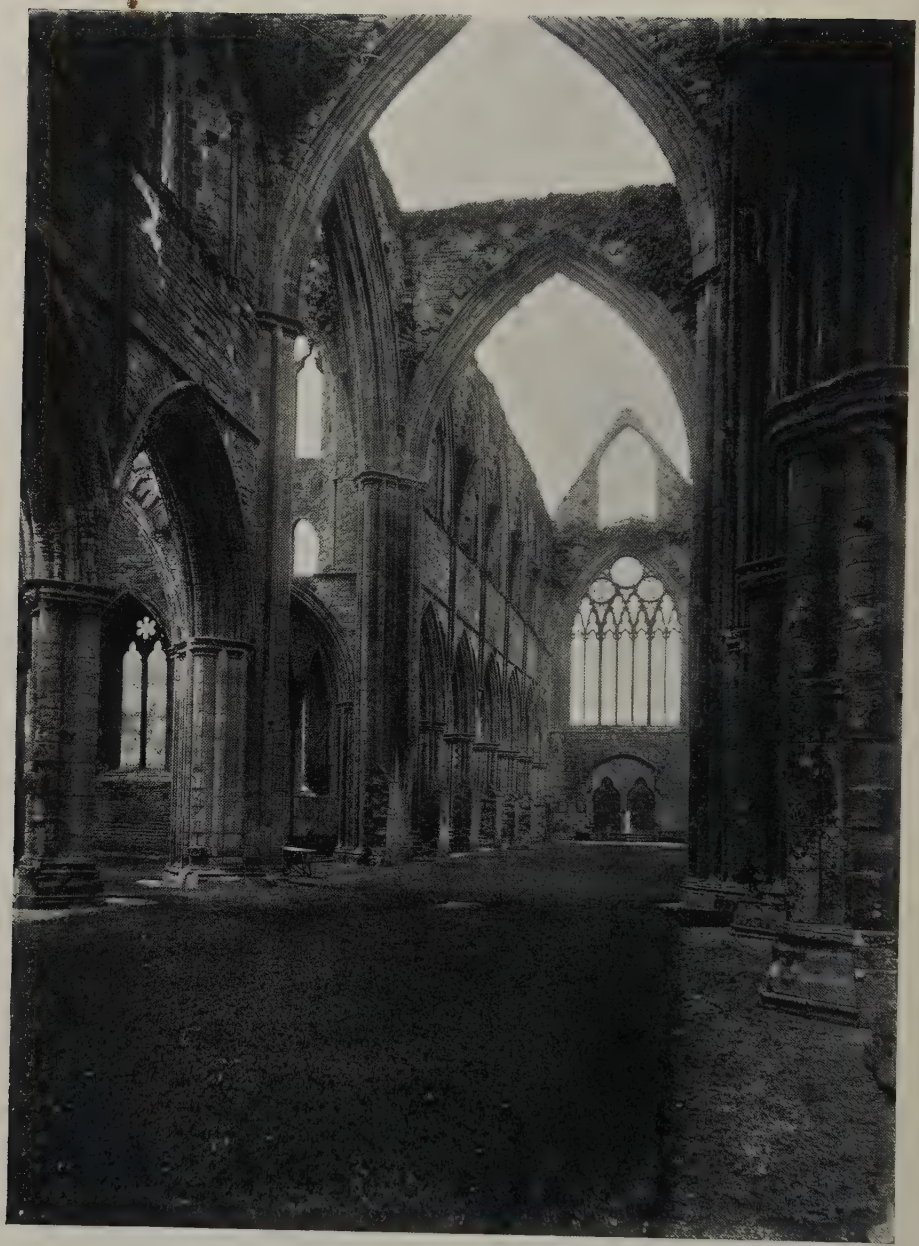
GARWAY

inside, and the fear that I might be accused of robbing a hen-roost, which in country places is generally considered to be one of the lowest sins, deterred me from closely examining it. What a long history for a dove-cot, and what millions of pigeons have here been born for men and cats to eat!

Our next point is to find Treago House or Castle, a very ancient fortified dwelling, but it takes a deal of finding, for it is far down in a lonely dell where the lanes are bad, and there is none from whom to ask our way.

The long summer daylight is fading, and the housekeeper strongly objects to our photographing anything. Wearied and worn and famished, for we had cycled fifty miles that day and climbed up many hills, we struggle on for civilisation, good roads, Hereford, and bed.

CHANCEL ARCH, GARWAY



TINTERN ABBEY

# TINTERN ABBEY—GOODRICH CASTLE

IN our little pilgrimages to old homes we have always sought out those where our predecessors lived and died, and which the destroying hand of man or time has spared. Where crowds of tourists go we shun, but sometimes we err, for "the best-laid schemes of mice and men gang aft agley," and tourists swarm where once was peace. With other company each of us had travelled down the Wye from Ross to Chepstow, and now we thought to go by road and quietly see the famous ruin once again.

To cycle up the pass in the dark lone hills to Llanthony had been a veritable pilgrimage, for there no motor car or vulgar tripper shocks the senses; the curlew or the peewit calls, the patient angler, or the still more patient, hopeless, shepherd, calmly waits for death. But at Tintern we meet with fashionable folk, the air resounds with jarring noises, irritating to our ears. Incongruous tourists unconsciously vex other senses, and we feel annoyed that we could not see again Tintern's grey ruin in the peace and quiet of its wondrous beauty.

Even the cycling down that celebrated valley of the Wye from Monmouth grows monotonous, and lacks, for me, the great variety of hopyards or orchards, game-fowl or Herefords, grange or court, or hall, in which our last few days have quickly sped away. As we enter that majestic ruined nave, the rooks and daws seem parodying the gutturals of the Germans, or the twang of the Yankees. A glance at the visitors' book by the door shows us in ink that is scarcely dry that here are pilgrims

TINTERN ABBEY (WEST WINDOW)

MONMOUTH GATE-HOUSE

from the uttermost ends of the earth. Chicago, Salford, Sydney, Sioux City, send hurrying crowds who rush round the ruins snapping snapshots, taking one another and blocking one another's views, the puzzle being to get a bit of beauteous sculpture, traceried window, or columned nave without a staring tourist. They mistrust their own work, for they buy that of others. Buying books and pictures freely; "Guess we'll take a few." They would buy the wheelbarrow and take it to America if they might, for the sake of the crown that is on it, and the initials of Edwardus Rex.

Tea-tide at Tintern is a great affair. Pretentious hotels with little German waiters, plain inns with slatternly wenches, cottages wreathed with roses and jessamine, with old women to wait on you, all provide tea. In some cases it would seem as if there had been a drop of something in it. X and I sit in a bower of bliss in the adjoining garden beneath the honeysuckle and the woodbine, close to the gorgeous western front of the ruined abbey. The jackdaw's querulous caw, the coach's brazen horn, the pigeon's mournful coo, the cyclist's bell, the tripper's loud and vulgar laugh, all mingle and clash as the world and time slide by. The wondrous beauty of those grey ruins should hush that ribald revelry. Has the sound of chant or vespers ceased for ever? The noisy folly even drowns the robin's song. Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.

There is twopence change in the bill, and I give it to the dirty girl who waits on us for a new bonnet. X laughs at my idea of the cost of new bonnets. "Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise." Her present bonnet or hat, or whatever it may be, does not seem to me to be worth twopence. I drag X up a steep hill to the church, to photograph the abbey from above it, and when we get there he will not take it, and we rush off to catch a train as if we were Yankees. The train only takes us as far as Monmouth, but that is far enough for

us, for it has saved the ride back and up the valley, and soon we are photographing that quaint and beautiful old gatehouse which haply echoed back the cheery voice or the ring of the horse's hoofs of the victor of Agincourt.

It was in Monmouth Shakspere's model king was born. The fast young man who left the fat Knight Falstaff with the hostess and Doll Tearsheet in the Boar's Head, Eastcheap, to be transformed into His Majesty, had "turned away his former self" when next they met. The poet probably knew the place, for here are a few sentences from the contentious Welshman: "Ay, he was porn at Monmouth. . . . I'll tell you there is goot men porn at Monmouth. . . . There is also, moreover, a river at Monmouth. . . . There is salmons in that river."

By the roadside, in what appears to be a school, there is an ornamented, old, stone-mullioned window. Tradition says that here Geoffrey of Monmouth wrote his romance of history. Here he called up the visionary, legendary King Arthur, and after him came the enchanter Merlin, the Knights of the Round Table, their immaculate perfections, and the Vision of the Holy Grail. Woe is me that what I learnt about them when I was a child, was—

"King Arthur had three sons,
Big knaves as e'er did swing;
He kicked them all three out of doors
Because they wouldn't sing.

*Chorus.*

Because they wouldn't sing,
He kicked them all three out of doors
Because they wouldn't sing."

From Monmouth we set off to find a very fine old hall named Wythall, to the south of Ross. Nobody can tell us anything about the place or the road thither. We are uncertain about seeing Goodrich Castle, but as we pass through the village we make a sudden dash for

GOODRICH CASTLE

GOODRICH CASTLE

the castle, which we are told is only a ten minutes' walk away. We soon have to leave the bikes in a ditch, partly hidden by briars. We carry the camera and hurry up a steep, long path to the castle, for the light is fading and we are far from home. It was about half-past seven, on a fine but misty evening in June. We bang at the castle gate as if we meant to take it, and we did take it (with the camera) before we had done. A most polite and amusing old gentleman comes out, asks us whether we are professionals or amateurs, saying the charge for the former would be a guinea, for the latter a shilling. Like an Irishman, I answer with another question, "Do we look like professionals?" He explains that he is an antiquary, has the custody of the building, with instructions, and lives there alone. My first thought is to throw him in the moat and take the castle, but on second thoughts we give him two shillings, and say we also are antiquaries. Then we almost embrace. He says he is delighted to have intelligent men to talk to, not mere picnickers, and if we will follow his instructions he will quickly show us the beauties of the castle. "Here, set your camera here, please, exactly here. I know to an inch, now, the river through that early English arch; that is the most picturesque view. Now turn round, please, and take the early Norman shaft and round arched window on the top of the keep. X tells him that is too high up, but he implores us to take his pet window, saying that no one can get to it, and every storm he expects will destroy it. Then he insists on our taking the ruined chapel from a most dangerous place, for he says the great ash that has grown in the moat since the civil wars fulfils the place of the stone tracery in the east window. The room above the chapel was for the priests, the one below for stores; but all the floors are gone, and we have to cling to the wall like flies. Our new friend has all sorts of things to show us, including three altars he has found,

GOODRICH CASTLE

which are not much in our way, and he insists on our finding a house in the village, which he says is now a constable's, dating from the thirteenth century. When we can get a word in, he tells us the way to Wythall, being the first man we asked who ever heard of it. As

NORMAN KEEP, GOODRICH

he rattles breathlessly along with notes historical, genealogical, and topographical, in regretful amusement we shout good-bye.

We cross the Wye at Kerne Bridge, and passing by the stately church of Walford we found, or rather thought we found, the house for which we were seeking, and photographed it as the sun was setting. A fine old black-

WYTHALL FARM

and-white farmhouse, very picturesque, but still disappointing for the account I had heard of it. As we had to wait while cattle were passing up and down the lane I spoke to the drover, then to a ditcher, finally went to the house, and found we had really taken the wrong place. The old hall was a much finer house, in the trees, beyond the pool. Our plates were all done, the light was worse, and we were told the old gentleman did not allow any one to photograph, so we fled.

It was two miles to Ross. Up and down and round about its narrow streets we went at a faster pace than was prudent or pleasant, but we were returning to Hereford again for the night, and it is always better to be getting home by dark. After the fine sweep by the castle and over Wilton Bridge, a long ascent for miles begins, and we were desperately tired with several days' hard work. For a blessing it was midsummer, and country folk go early to bed. The roads were good, and we had new free-wheel bicycles, therefore we developed a little harmless racing, for without exertion or rivalry we found amusement in letting our free-wheels roll downhill together. That was soon found to be a very one-sided match. The Beeston Humber flew from the other like a thoroughbred from a hackney. It is an axiom with prudent cyclists never to "let her rip," or go too fast, unless the way is clear and the bottom of the hill in sight. Down Aconbury Hill we may glide two miles on the way towards Hereford. The road looks good and clear. The daylight dies. Let her rip. *In manus tuas.*

It is like the swoop of a falcon. The two miles are done in about four minutes, the Humber being a quarter of a mile ahead. It is exhilarating in the extreme, but rather too fast for two old men who are getting in their dotage.

# LITTLE MORETON HALL

LITTLE MORETON HALL, or Moreton Old Hall, as it is generally named—for it is near to a new hall which is stately and grand, but seldom looked at—lies close to the great south road from Manchester, four miles beyond Congleton. Between Alderley and Congleton the country is very beautiful

REEDSMERE

by Capesthorne's famous thorns and Reedsmere's placid pool, where, on the day that this is written, I saw some hundreds of wild duck and water-fowl. There are also the primitive black-and-white churches of Marton and

Siddington by the wayside. By another route the crowds at Alderley and Congleton may be missed, and we missed Wilmslow also. The Ryley's Lane at Alderley takes one to Chelford, then straight on between the parks of Astle and Withington Halls is a most beautiful road, which may be continued through Lower

SIDDINGTON CROSS

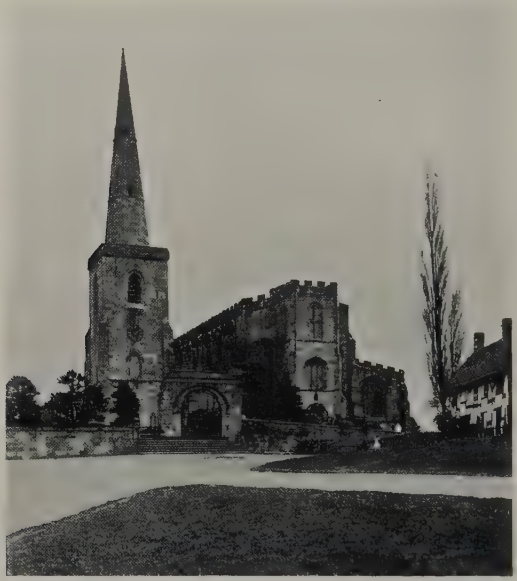
Withington and past the picturesque hall of Welltrough, then down the dangerous descent to the fertile valley of the Dane between the parks of Somerford and Somerford Booths, joining the turnpike road where Astbury's stately church comes into view and the rugged outlines of Mow Cop.

A little farther on, across the fields, there comes a lovely vision of magpie buildings, half hidden in the trees, with lichened roofs of varied heights and many

SIDDINGTON CHURCH

gables, encircled round with shining waters gleaming here and there amid the rich green grass and backed by the everlasting hills.

Turning to the left, through a plain gateway, and crossing open fields or park under the stately remnants of an avenue, we approach the venerable and beautiful pile of Moreton Old Hall. It is probably the most



ASTBURY CHURCH

picturesque of any of the timber-framed houses in the country, the most picturesque houses in the world. It is not kept up as the home of the wealthy, as are the lovely halls of Speke or Pitchford, for it is used as a farmhouse; but still it is well kept, and I should think it would take nearly all the rent of the farm to maintain the fabric in good repair.

The moat is square and broad, about eighty yards, or ten Cheshire rods, to the side, and the water is fairly clear. It is crossed by a stone bridge, immediately

MORETON OLD HALL

behind which rises the magnificent gatehouse, three storeys in height, and backed by many quaint and curious old-fashioned rooms, time-worn enough, but probably not as old as the great hall or the glorious windows across the courtyard, the famous octagonal bays of Moreton. This quadrangular, pebbled courtyard, surrounded by a bewildering maze of cornered windows, dim recesses, infinite inscriptions, doorways stairways, carved sentries, ornamental details, horse-block beyond the fortified entrance by the double door, all as it was three hundred years ago, must be unique. No wonder soap-boilers and others of the newly rich want to copy it when they are tired of modern architecture. Let us hide our bicycles, for the dogs will never cease from barking while these gimcrack playthings affront the old-world calm.

In giving a very slight and feeble description of this old home, I might begin with the words of our nurse, and say, "There's so much to be done I don't know where to turn me." Most people begin with the inscriptions over the main windows, and quote them wrongly. As parts of them cannot be seen in the photographs, though most of them can, I will try to give them correctly, putting in brackets a bare mention of animals, which may be merely for ornament, or may have some reference to armorial bearings. "God is al in al thing. This (fox) windous (hare) whire (man's head) made by William (dragon) Moreton in the yeare of (bear's head, the Brereton crest) oure Lorde MDLIX (bull's head, Bulkeley crest)." Those are round the upper storey of the highly ornamented windows of the great hall and the withdrawing room. On the lower storey of the latter there is: "Rycharde Dale Carpeder made thies windous by the Grac of God." The letters are all capitals, the timber all oak, and most profusely carved at every cornice, gable, barge-board or pendant.

If we call this great hall and drawing-room the state

THE GATEHOUSE

apartments they face the south and the back of the fortified entrance under the grand gatehouse, the front of which also faces the south. The four sides of the buildings are about square with the points of the compass. At the west side is the old kitchen with its original

THE MOAT

furniture, pewter with the Moreton crest, and a spice chest with drawers enough to hold all the spices of Araby the Blest and all the herbs our grandmothers ever knew. On the east of the quadrangle is the chapel, perhaps the oldest bit of the place. Churches and public-houses do endure longer than most buildings. This one is rather remarkable, for the chancel and the nave (if I may use

THE STATELY CENTRE

the customary terms) are so tiny, being only a few yards square, and the nave is without a window, having the priest's room over it. A rood screen goes up to the ceiling, but through it may be seen on the chancel walls very old texts in black letter which are almost illegible. At the east end is a plain pointed window of five lights. It is evident that very few sinners were expected or intended to worship here in the good old days, although there was once a bishop in the family; for in the well-known Itinerary of Vale Royal we may read that this place "gave breeding to that famous Bishop Moreton, which in the time of Richard the Third, the usurper, contrived that project of the marriage of the two heirs of the houses of York and Lancaster, from whence proceeded the happiness that we enjoy at this day." This refers to Shakspere's John Morton, Bishop of Ely, whom Richard addressed in the well-known words in the vivid scene of the withered arm and the accusation of Hastings:—

> "My Lord of Ely, when I was last in Holborn,
> I saw good strawberries in your garden there;
> I do beseech you send for some of them."
> "Marry, and will, my lord, with all my heart."

Here is another bit of history, this time out of Ormerod, who has struggled hard to make an authentic pedigree. It refers to the father of the builder of the hall, who was evidently a keen one, and perhaps the first authentic founder. Rode of Rode disputed with Moreton of Moreton "which should sit highest in the churche and foremost goo in procession." They left the case to the Justice Bromley and Sir William Brereton, and, doubtless after spending freely in law and folly, they received an award which might lead them to further litigation: "He that may dispende in landes by title of enheritaunce ten mark or above more than the other." So the judge and the knight and "twelve of the most auncyent men in

A WINDOW OF WITHDRAWING-ROOM

Astebery" thought little of the blue blood and the prodigious pedigrees of their squabbling squires, but reckoned them up as if they were mere property jobbers. In after years their children, Tom Rode and Alice Moreton, married and patched up the quarrel that way. Their granddaughter, Alice, married a neighbour, John Lowndes of Overton, from whom in eighth descent came our friend X.

Let us spend our day exploring nooks and corners of this fine old rambling building. There are four circular staircases, winding up and down to endless empty rooms, entering from one another, wonderfully adapted for hide-and-seek, or ghosts, or nightly noises, for they are beautifully panelled in grand old oak. The designers had great care for sanitary matters, as there are several closets, like little rooms, projecting from the outer walls, with chimney flues turned upside down. The modern cheese-room was formerly two secret chambers, access to which was by a cunningly hidden sliding panel near to the floor, with a hole for retreat which may have led under the moat, but probably gave access to the garden only. There seem to have been several little doors from the house to the garden ready for emergencies.

The newel post, round which the stairs wind to the ballroom over the gatehouse, is one straight oak to the top of the three storeys. The doors from the stairs to the rooms all have primitive fastenings, with great bars of oak to bolt right across them into holes in the wall. The ballroom itself is a most beautiful old room. Long and narrow, just the thing for the old-fashioned country dances, it is panelled with splendidly grained oak to about four feet high, and above that is nearly all windows with richly patterned leadlights, through which the sun or the moon may cast fantastic shadows on the rocky floor or oaken walls. The floors are of cement, which time has caused to roll up and down

THE GATEHOUSE FROM THE COURTYARD

in undulations that are amusing to the walker, but might be troublous to the dancer. The ceiling is diapered with timber in pattern, and the ends of the room have figures and mottoes. A blindfolded figure of Fortune with wheel over her head has "The wheele

CIRCULAR STAIR (page 212) SHOWING OTHER STAIRS TO THE LEFT AND THE STRONG STAPLES FOR OAKEN BARS

of Fortune whose rule is ignoraunce," the wheel bearing "Qui modo scandit corruet statim," which may be translated, "Who climbs at all may tumble any time." At the other end of the room a figure of Destiny or Fate transfixing a globe has "The speare of destinye whose ruler is knowledge."

There are other writings on the glass and on the walls, for the vulgar, modern cad has even cut his

THE PORCH

repulsive initials into the finely grained oak, and English oak with such medullary markings could not now be gotten for love or money. Some of the old writings

A SMALL ROOM OVER ENTRANCE

are worth copying, though the originals cannot be found. An old Tory writes: "All change I scorne," "Men can noe more know women's mind by Kaire than by her shadow judge what clothes shee weare."

We spent the day photographing and noting. When

THE BALLROOM

I want a picture of circular stairs, X says the exposure must be for half-an-hour; so we set the camera and leave it while we get our lunch of home-made cheese and butter, where he says his ancestress Alice Moreton sat. The hostess, Mrs. Dale (carpenter Dale built the windows), says "the charge for photographing is a shilling." X replies, "Here are five shillings; it is

THE MOUND

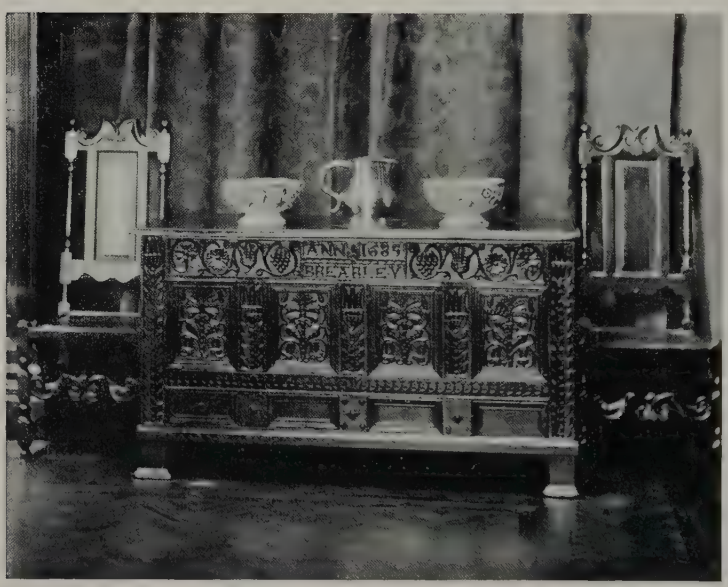
well worth it." She seems inclined to treat us, but again he pays more than asked, for he is enjoying himself.

We wander up and down and round about, even to the farm buildings across the moat, try the seats on the mounds and view the country by Mow Cop. There are two great mounds, one on either side of the moat. They would be made originally for watch-towers or fortifications; now they are pleasant seats for air and scenery. At Boscobel there is one very similar to these. A yew tree by the hall is quite resplendent with myriads

MORETON OLD HALL FROM THE SOUTH-WEST

of its gleaming waxen berries, and all the ground beneath is strewn with them.

The whole place reflects the greatest credit on the maiden lady who preserves it and allows visitors to roam about it—a kindness that is sometimes abused. It is very rare for any house to be kept in a state so similar to its original one of three hundred years ago. The fashions have changed, but not the house. Even I first saw it from horseback. Now we go for bikes, and another two dozen miles of cycling, mostly through the lanes of Cheshire, ends a pleasant pilgrimage to a charming old home.



# DIEULACRES ABBEY

WHEN I began to write books the knowledge of bits of history and topography that had been gotten in an active life through years of wanderings in and beyond Cheshire on business, sport, or pleasure, the legendary lore or folk-lore had to be confirmed and added to by "book-larnin'" as the unlettered term it. Ormerod's history I read right through, some parts of it many times. There are also other histories, and in my early readings I was often puzzled with the mention of Dieulacres Abbey, which apparently was a Cheshire abbey, but which I had never heard of and could not find. This once rich abbey was founded by an all-powerful Earl of Chester, had great estates in the county, including the church revenues of Sandbach, Leek, and Rudyard, but was in wild lands outside the county boundary, and even a hundred years ago was said to be buried, grass-grown, and utterly forgotten.

The name of Dieulacres Abbey is spelt all sorts of ways. I find four different spellings on one page of old records. The site is close to the town of Leek, where Hugh Cyveliok died. It seems probable to me that he may have been killed or had some accident when hunting that history has not recorded, for here his son transferred a colony of white monks from Pulton on the Dee. The monks were taken from the fury of the Welsh, but they may have looked back longingly on that pleasant land when they found themselves in those bleak, barren, wind-swept moors, where even the place-names reminded them of wolves, or boars, or stones.

Randle Blondevill (or white town, from the place of his birth), Earl of Chester, was a remarkable man, perhaps the most powerful man in England, a Prince of Wales, had five earldoms, two or three wives but no children, was a Crusader, did "great atchievements,"

DIEULACRES ABBEY

and wrote a book! He married a prince's widow, Constance in name. They were divorced, and each married again, she dying of leprosy in a year, and he marrying another widow, when he ought to have been ware of any more. He locked the French king up in Lincoln Cathedral with his followers, and made him swear on the gospels on the altar that he would never lay claim to England, but hasten off out of the realm at once. Then he brought the youth Henry the Third from a cowshed

and set him on the altar, and caused all the nobles to swear fealty to him. He was in the wars in France, and went on a crusade, where, on the return journey, a great storm arose, and when the ship was nearly lost he told the sailors that if they could only keep it going to midnight they would be all right and safe, for then his

DIEULACRES ABBEY

monks would be praying for him. All which turned out as he prophesied, and the storm assuaged at once; at least the monks said so. Something that we may still see did come to pass from this crusade, for he built Beeston Castle, with its towers copied from Byzantium or Constantinople, and some of them remain to this day.

He must have had great ideas and grand chances as

to property speculations, for he bought all the land between the Ribble and the Mersey for forty marks of silver. That is, nearly all Lancashire, for what I have elsewhere calculated would probably be the equivalent of a hundred sacks of flour. At to-day's value of silver it would not buy a yard of land in the centre of any of the big towns. There were no rates in those days, and yet we are often being told that as the rates go up the value of the land must go down. The bargain certainly shows that Lancashire then was little better than a barren wilderness, costing as much to keep as it was worth, and probably to help it he gave a charter to our neighbouring borough of Salford.

This earl also gave to the Duttons of Dutton the right to license all the minstrels and lechers of Cheshire, a right which was confirmed to them by Queen Elizabeth, when even wandering fiddlers had to get a licence from them. I am rather wandering from the legend of the abbey, and had better tell it in my own way. The original is in Latin, with some Norman or French words, and though several historians quote them, none of them explain the joke.

The earl, it appears, had had a bad night and been dreaming. Perhaps he had eaten too many black puddings, for Cheshire folk were always fond of them, or perhaps it was because he had once refused to pay tithes to the Pope. He woke his wife, and said, "Clemence, my dear, I must build a monastery." She replied in French, "Deux encres," and he, pleased at the words, said, "That shall be its name, Deulacres." Then, when he laid the foundation-stone of the abbey, he cried in French "Deux encres," and all the people answered, "Amen," and so the place was called "Deulacres" as the name of God was invoked upon it. Her words literally translated would be "two inks" (double it and let us have it in writing), but they probably meant "The gods increase it," or "God's cross." No one tells

DIEULACRES ABBEY

us how Deulacres was invented, but henceforth every historian spells it in his own way—for instance, De-la-cresse, Diewe le encresse, De la cross, Dieu l'encres.

The glory of the house increased, and the abbots waxed fat, for in one of their Cheshire leases the tenant stipulates that, though he would entertain the abbot and twelve mounted companions twice a year, he would not find them wine or oysters, or even fresh salmon at all times. Quite right of him; let them find their own malmsey and oysters, or be content with bread and cheese and ale. When the Defender of the Faith grabbed the place, and gave it to what was probably one of his unofficial wives and her husband, the whole crew were turned adrift, and the old home grass-grown and deserted.

A new house seems to have arisen on the old one, for on the porch is the date 1612, and the initials of T. and A. B. The gateway has another date, of which 67 are the last figures. It is made of odd pieces of highly sculptured stone, a king and a saint being on either side. All over the farm buildings are bosses, saints' heads, gargoyles, an Agnus Dei, and the end of a calf-cote has a very fine stone coffin lid engraved with cross and sword. Even the pigsties are partly made of the stones of the abbey. What became of the heart of the great earl, the founder, which was here buried? Perhaps the pigs ate it. Why should not they? It is a free country, and he would have eaten them. It is also said to be a Christian country, with a national church by law established, but queer things are done in it.

We went to have a look at the old church at Leek, and, leaving our bikes by the churchyard rails, X was going into the church a little before me, when a sexton stopped him, saying they could not have cyclists in the church, so X naturally consigned the church to condemnation, and went off; but I persisted in going in, and found it what might have been expected. A church that has plainly once been fine and beautiful, with all

DIEULACRES ABBEY

the beauty "protested" or "restored" away. "Cyclists not admitted," nor any one else welcomed unless they subscribe to something, if it is only the thirty-nine articles. Perhaps if we could wait till Sunday the doctrine preached might be extra sound, but we travel on, with reminiscences of Gawsworth and Didsbury.

"TO WHAT BASE USES WE MAY COME"

Let us rather consider our day's journey across Cheshire to this valley of the Churnet, in the wild moorlands of Staffordshire. A fine spring morning, when the damsons were in bloom, found us going through Styal, down the steep, narrow path by Greg's Mill, where we used to ride on horseback in days of yore. Through the fields above the Bollin, where the glittering gorse was flowering, and acres of freshly budding trees were spread below, we gain

SALTERSLEY

the road near by the well-kept gardens round the cottages that were made out of the deserted Meeting-House of the Friends. A little past the steep descent to Oversley Ford, we turn down a very narrow rough road to the right, where stands a cottage, thatched and tumbledown, of varied heights and age. It was shut up, with no one near. A very ancient yew grows by its side. Masses of ivy enshroud a dormer window and picturesque gable. The damson trees around are white as snow, but the light is against us, and I particularly want a photograph, having reason to believe that from this very house my mother's mother's mother, whose name was Betty Roylance, was married to James Barratt at Wilmslow, in 1771. The house this James Barratt, my mother's grandfather, built at Hale Barns is not far off, but is not very picturesque. When playing as a child in the garden there she was frightened by a snake; a fascinating snake-tale for her children.

We retrace our way up the lane, go for a mile or two towards Mobberley, and turn across the fields to the left to a curious old house standing on the edge of Lindow Moss. It is named Saltersley, as if some of the brine-pits that were not uncommon in Cheshire had once been here. It seems strange for a solid stone house to have been built away from everywhere, with nothing but spongy moss in front and by its sides. It is low and solid, without date, but there is a long old-fashioned table within it that is dated 1639, so the house must have been built before then, or built round the table. Certainly the table cannot be got out of the house without pulling some of the walls down, or it would have been sold, for it is valuable. It is of massive oak, with six legs, and behind it is a Jacobean screen with raised seat, all redolent of faded gentility. From the initials, "F. H.," that are on the table, it was probably made for the Hulmes, who sold the small estate to the Strettels in 1662. Since then there have been many owners, and apparently poverty-stricken

TABLE AND SCREEN AT SALTERSLEY

tenants, for the place has a weird, lost look. Begirt about as it is by quaking bog, it may some day go down quick into the pit, leaving only corpse-lights to flicker o'er the moss where once had been a human home.

We venture on again in the direction of Alderley Edge, along a most uncanny path, shoving our bikes through moss and mire and heather, with pitfalls of black slush to engulf us at any false step. The corn-crakes hoarsely croak and the peewits would lure us astray, but we plod carefully on until the path enters a field and becomes a cart-track; then we emerge into a lane which is a foot deep in sand; but it also improves, and we keep Alderley Edge as a beacon until we stand on it, where there is a well-known inn called the Wizard. From there we take the road to Macclesfield, which is not a very savoury town. The way beyond it, over the moors towards Leek, is not enticing, but the fresh air on the hills is bracing, and pilgrims must be content with their lot.

LINDOW MOSS

ONE OF MY ANCESTRAL HOMES (page 230)

# MONTGOMERY CASTLE—MARRINGTON HALL

IT had long been our intention to make a pilgrimage to Montgomery Castle, for Roger de Montgomery, who built it, is the only one of X's numerous ancestors whose name has survived him in castle, town, and county. Unfortunately no one could tell us anything about the town or the county of Montgomery, and they are not marked on the map of England. As most people flatly contradict this statement, and others say they are in Scotland, it may be as well to say they are really somewhere in Wales. We might have doubted if there were such places if we had not already made a pilgrimage to the tomb of the great Norman in Shrewsbury Abbey, where we were rather disappointed with his effigy, for since it has lost its head and hands and feet there is little chance of seeing any family likeness there might be in any of his descendants.

When William the Conqueror parcelled out the lands of the Saxons among his followers, and also gave them all they could get off the Welsh, his kinsman Roger got 157 manors, and grabbed more from his neighbours on the borderland, to which he gave his own name; and it shows the capability of the man and his master if we consider that for centuries after their time no Saxon or Norman was ever safe in the fair land of Montgomery.

Roger built his nest like an eagle builds its eyry—on a precipitous crag, from whence he could behold afar.

As soon as he was safely buried the Welsh sacked and burnt the castle and killed every one in it. The

MONTGOMERY CASTLE

red-haired Rufus hastened in revenge, but sullenly retreated as his army wasted away. Another castle rose and fell, and another hundred years went by, when that treacherous villain, King John, sought to buy Llewelyn by agreeing that Llewelyn should really be the Prince of Wales if he would marry one of his numerous chance children. John had enough to do with his barons. So Llewelyn made hay while he could, and restored Shrewsbury to the Welsh. War again, ceaseless war, during which King Henry spent immense treasure and labour in making Montgomery Castle into an impregnable fortress. I was amused to find he sent a special messenger to know whether they were using the perch of twenty-four feet in their measurements of the rebuilding. That is now called the Cheshire rod, or big measure of eight yards. Cheshire acres are reckoned by it, and it sometimes is the side of a hall or church tower.

Llewelyn hanged a Norman knight, and ravaged the country from the morasses of the Severn. Every Welsh prisoner dangled from the battlements of the newly strengthened castle; but guile came to Llewelyn's aid, and a monk betrayed the English. Henry replied by sacking the nearest abbey, just as in our days we have heard it taught that for every murder in Ireland they should hang the nearest priest.

"The Devastator of England," as his bards termed Llewelyn, earned his proud name, and replied again with fire and sword. Battle, murder, and sudden death, the screams of the women, the fierce yells of men as their homes go up in flames, shock this sweet summer scene, while the Welsh are off to the mountains, there to bide till winter's famine and the ague eat the English up. Time after time has Montgomery been devastated and all around laid waste, until the last great devastation came when the English fell out among themselves, and now the lonely ruin stands a picturesque wreck, while the Welsh have their own way, and come to Eng-

FROM MONTGOMERY CASTLE

land as they like, annexing all the money they can, for no man hindereth them now. What was the good of all the fighting? Now the land is free to all, the total value of the county town is about the same as that of a few yards of Hanging Ditch in Manchester, where men sell butter and eggs and bacon.

From this lofty fortress how sweet and pure seems the air. Far below us—farther than eye can see – there stretches Powys Land, the Paradise of the Cymry. There seem no limits to its wealth and beauty. Straight as a dart for miles the road gleams white through thousands of acres of fertile fields, where the white-faced Herefords and the black Welsh cattle chew their cud in peace together, and the Shropshire sheep climb up into the ruins of the castle to seek its shade and breathe the fresh breeze as we do. Peace and quiet where for centuries men's eyes glared hate at one another; but no wonder Briton or Celt or Norman or English should strive so desperately for this fair land. There was none of that fierce fighting for Lancashire. Its bleak hills and damp mosses were not worth a curse in those tumultuous days, for coal and steam were then unknown, of merchandise there was none, and its poverty was extreme. But here—

> "Saxon, from yonder mountain high,
> I marked thee send delighted eye,
> Far to the south and west, where lay,
> Extended in succession gay,
> Deep waving fields and pastures green,
> With gentle slopes and groves between :—
> These fertile plains, that soften'd vale,
> Were once the birthright of the Gael;
> The stranger came with iron hand,
> And from our fathers reft the land.
> . . . . . .
> Think'st thou we will not sally forth,
> To spoil the spoiler as we may,
> And from the robber rend the prey?
> Ay, by my soul!"

Here is an amusing little excerpt from the old records of 1282. The governor of the castle charges the king with the cost of prisoners. "Holy Wauhan and his son David with their two Welsh pages, 106 days at sixpence a day, and for a further 128 days for David alone at twopence a day." Wauhan doubtless means Vaughan. Sixpence a day for the lot was cheap, even if they were fed on the first-class fare of black puddings and oatcake. Perhaps David kept his page, or had a big appetite, for he was charged more. Of course there was a mistake in the reckoning in the favour of the maker out of the bill.

From the steep hill of Montgomery we cycled rapidly down the straight road to Chirbury, whose big white tower could be seen three miles away. We cross the celebrated Offa's Dyke, and are in Shropshire, where we turn for Marrington, one of its oldest halls; for the present owner tells us that when he rebuilt the house that had been there for three hundred years, many of the timbers were found to be those of a much older house that had been used over again.

Above the door are the arms of its successive lords —the De Bolers or Bowdlers had held it for centuries. A hollow oak tree with a garden seat inside it grows near by the porch, and on the lawn is a sun-dial, probably one of the most curious in existence. On a big stone base is a column about four feet high of intensely hard stone, for its edges are wonderfully sharp. The base is now broken, and as every bit is or has been covered with dials or coats of arms, or mottoes in English or Latin, there is some difficulty in deciphering everything. For instance, I began the inscription on the north side of the base: "Who wrought this stone for thee to sit on R Lloyd. . . ." It should be: "For chariti bid me adw (adieu) who wrought this stone for thee tomb of R Lloyd." Above that is: "These shades

MARRINGTON HALL

MARRINGTON HALL

do fleet from day to day, and so this life passeth awaie." Round the apex is Latin, something about lux or light, and finis, the end of the journey being the grave. As the sun was shining on the south and west sides of the monolith we have a good photograph of them, with every detail, even to the date 1595. The main part of the figure 5 is nearly straight, like a reversed 7, and the 9 has very little tail.

On the south side is "Deus mihi." Then come a skull and crossbones "Fui ut es: eris ut sum" (I was as thou art: thou wilt be as I am). Then a floriated cross, and below that an owl in an oak. Twisted snakes, dragons, horses' heads, and other funny things are on the east and west sides. For the benefit of those interested in heraldry I quote the names of some of the families who claim the arms: Cornish choughs, for De Boulers; nags' heads, for Lloyd; owls, for Broughton; twisted snakes, for Ednywain ap Bredwen. On the north is the old gentleman himself, with long straight hair, a big ruff, and trunk hose—that is, stockings up to his thighs—and then a crinoline round him. Over him is "Ut hora sic vita" (As the hours so the life). Therefore we are to suppose he was all his life or hours praying, with a foot of hair and a yard of stocking. What a pleasant party to live with!

There may have been more like him, for his father is said to have died young, leaving nine sons and four daughters. What might there have been if he had been mercifully spared? Our Richard has not only left us his likeness when dressed, but also in his bones; for in Chirbury Church, over his corner, is a memento mori, or remembrance of death, with a skull and crossbones, his coat armour, three nags' heads, and "Ric Lloid, 1589." He lived thirty years after he had that put up, and probably enjoyed it more than the sermon; but why should his coat of arms be put on his

SUN-DIAL AT MARRINGTON HALL

bones? Perhaps he wanted the latter labelling so that they might never be mixed with any other fellow's bones.

He and the vicar also got an agreement drawn up "for the avoyding of strife, to take as nere as was esy a true viewe of all pewes and kneelings, and tythes and customes, as layd downe by the gentry XXX yeares ago." For every hop garden sixpence yearly must be paid at the feast of "St. Michaell the Arch Angell," also twopence for an orchard and twopence for a dove-cot. Not very high rates, but they are probably gone up since those primitive times.

The little river at Marrington Hall is the only river which flows from England into Wales, and therefore they are very proud of it. Adjoining the garden is a very beautiful dingle or dell.

In searching for any historical bits about the neighbourhood my eye was arrested with the term "cock-feeder," and further researches brought a very interesting old tale to light. It seems that when this Richard Lloyd of Marrington was High Sheriff of Montgomeryshire, in 1615, a relative of his was tried and condemned for murder. The publications of the Powysland Club give other bits about a once noted county feud, with the copy of a title deed which is now in Powis Castle, and relating thereto. Jones came from a place which has fifteen letters in the name, even when contracted, so I give that up and offer the following remarks.

Cockfighting was the all-absorbing sport of our fathers in time of peace, and is a much more innocent and better sport than many which are indulged in to-day. For the cock is only like a Christian, and likes a fight; you cannot make him fight unless he wants to; and "to live like a fighting-cock" is a proverbial expression showing the highest happiness of an English

gentleman. A man with the familar name of Tom Jones was cockfeeder or cocker to the Herberts, lords of Montgomery Castle, and great estates in the neighbourhood. They "delighted much" in cocking, and a great main was on with John Lloyd, who tried to get some of Herbert's cocks off Tom Jones, but could not "prevaile on him"; Jones saying he would sooner lose his life than betray his trust. Shortly after, sundry Lloyds and Joneses were drinking in an alehouse in Welshpool when Jones the cocker came in, and there were quarrels. John Lloyd went home, bade his servant give him his rapier and go to bed, for he was going out. Tom Jones was expected early in the morning at a fair, but he never got there, for he was found in the early gloom thrust through the body with a rapier. "Dead men tell no tales." Lord Herbert was jealous for his cocks, and pressed for judgment, though Owen Vaughan, uncle to John Lloyd, offered the widow her weight in silver and gold to hush the matter up; but "ye widow's answer was yt she wd not sell ye blood of ye father of her children." Lloyd was condemned to death, but had a "repreef," his lands being forfeited to the lord of the manor. The lord was Herbert, who had pushed the prosecution; but as he was concerned he would not touch "the price of blood," and the widow and "ye fatherlesse" got some of the malefactor's lands, called Maes-y-Llyndy. Nearly a hundred years after, in 1709, one Davies, a Quaker, who was grandson to the above Tom Jones, died, and his son-in-law Jacob Endor had a deed drawn up showing his title to the land. It would

appear that in course of time the plot, or some of it, came to be known as the Quaker's Field, near Llyndu, and tradition said a man was there gibbeted, the field having been gotten as the price of blood. Quite recently the Herberts, Earls of Powys, bought it at a large price, for it adjoined their park, and so ends this most interesting tale, the moral of which is: After all the squabbling in alehouses, "feloniouse murtheringes," and "delightful" cockfightings, the Quakers come best off, for they get the lands and stick to them for nigh two hundred years.

A TOBY JUG

# LYMORE—CHIRBURY

WHEN we were examining the wonderful sundial at Marrington Hall, the squire asked us if we had called at Lymore on our way from Montgomery Castle. We had never heard of the place, though we had seen a large black-and-white house near to the castle-hill. At the Herbert Arms, Chirbury, we were told again that Lymore was by far the best old house in the country, that it was the first place on the left, down the second lane, about three miles off. That sounded well, the first house in three miles, and X fidgeted about time, but time was made for slaves; we must make time, though we had to come back again to Chirbury; so we flew, and were well rewarded.

The greater part of the road we had already gone over; it was as thronged as before with hundreds of young thrushes, and is a beautiful undulating road. I called to X to look out for Offa's Dyke, the big ditch dug by King Offa to divide England from Wales. As he did not clearly hear, I again shouted, "Offa's Dyke." His reply was, "Who's off his bike? I'm not." So I was, nearly.

Down a steep and narrow lane into a stately park we go, where we wind round hills and trees by a pool whereon the swans are gliding with their dusky brood, and quarrelsome coots are chasing the lesser waterhens away. Beyond the farther shore a conical hill, the sharp-cut peak of Corndon, is glistening in the sun,

all faithfully reflected in the dark waters below the great woods.

Here was a decoy for wildfowl, when the hospitality of the Herberts was so profuse that it became a common saying of the country-folk about the wildfowl or the game, that whichever way they flew they would light at Black Hall (that is, Lymore) at last. Amid a herd of grand Herefords, some of which looked like weighing a ton, and by a picturesque saw-mill, where great trunks of trees are piled, we rode up to the hall as if we owned it, and I left X to photograph it while I went to ask permission.

We had been told the house was not inhabited, but a caretaker lived in one of two adjoining cottages. No one was there but a little girl, who said she could take me in the back way, so I went with her and opened the front door for X. We were greatly delighted, roaming and staring about like country gorbies at a fair. There must be acres of oaken flooring and panelling. Not little thin bits, but thick and massive, with a marvellous staircase, where the newel posts are oak trees deeply carved for solid ornaments to stand in high relief. On the first floor this staircase divides, and ascends again past the state bedrooms, reappearing at a little balcony, or minstrels' gallery, which seemed to me just the place for a ghost to look down on the revelry. Our girl guide said, "Oh no, the ghosts don't come there;" she would show us the ghost rooms; so we ran back for the camera. But then she said we could not see the ghosts in the daytime, and some people said they were only bats. Oh yes, she could show me the bats, though they had killed forty a few days before. When I asked if they had used them in a pie, she was disgusted, saying they killed them because they were nasty things that made messes, and they were told to kill them.

As X talked of a five minutes' exposure to photo-

LYMORE

graph the staircase, I went up to the attics, the third floor, to see the bats, and there they were, such funny-looking little creepy creatures. They hang to a beam with one claw and wrap themselves up in their wings and go to sleep. Then if we disturb one, it peeps from under its wing, wriggles round and tries the other side, then pops its head under its bed-clothes again and swings itself to sleep. If again disturbed it mutters and flutters and squeaks about, for it does not love "the garish day." What a happy life, to flit about in the gloaming catching flies, which are a nuisance to everything, flitting o'er those lovely pools and 'mid those shady trees, where the mother bats have their babies clinging to them while they fly. Does the lord of the land, of Powysland, know that forty of them were killed because they made messes and were taken for ghosts? They might have been kept out or banished. I would have found them a home at Didsbury.

The oak in this house is wonderful. All the floors are waxed and polished, but the panelling, doors, and other oaken work is simply dusted, neither oiled nor waxed, and consequently is a light grey colour, very different from the ordinary conventional idea of oak; the floors are beautifully glossy and dark, very slippery, and therefore rather dangerous—the light oak often shows the graining or medullary rays very beautifully, and some of the panels are of immense breadth. The place is certainly very well kept, fires being made in the winter. Lady Powis and a party had a picnic tea there in the afternoon previous to our visit, and shortly after Lord Kitchener was to shoot the neighbouring coverts or stubbles. The house has not been inhabited for nearly two hundred years, and yet there is the old furniture, the bandy-legged chairs, the faded tapestry, the dim pictures, even the pewter on the pantry dresser, with the willow-pattern plates, which we also carefully pictured.

FIRST FLOOR OF GRAND STAIRCASE, LYMORE

This faded tapestry round the bedrooms, over the oaken panelling, has a very weird, uncanny look, for it is covered with life-size figures of men and women, all

THE SCULLERY, LYMORE

stimulating to the midnight imagination and dreams. When bats go fluttering round in the moonlight like dusky angels, or hang to the canopy of the poster bedsteads while they squeak and mutter, what realism it

A BEDROOM, LYMORE

must give to the scene! Two fat men, with enormous muscles, are kissing and embracing amid a crowd of Eastern beauties, and our youthful guide says that is the meeting of Esau and Jacob. They must have fed up for the occasion. Another room has Oriental judges squatting for judgment, which I suggest is Susannah and the Elders; but X says Susannah was a woman, and this is a man. How is any one to know the difference? There is a motto which only a professor could translate, "Que duratura per eum," and the date 1545, where the figure 5 is like a letter s.

The house itself is dated 1675, which is very late for a timber-built house, and it must have taken a thousand oaks to make it. It is four storeys high, and even the attics are crowded with enormous oaken beams roughly adzed to shape. Edward, the third Lord Herbert of Chirbury, was the builder. A hundred years after the death of the first Lord Herbert his autobiography was found in it, hidden away. The whole house seems full of more or less secret chambers, or closets, or dark passages, which lead to nowhere in particular. All useful in those troublous times. The state bedrooms with their landing could be isolated any night from the rest of the house by the locking of one door. Perhaps a safeguard for all parties. It was certainly built by the Lords Herbert when Montgomery Castle was destroyed, and they had to make themselves another home. Having lately been dabbling a bit in old oak, I suggested to X that it would cost £10,000 to replace the oak, in that house, and his reply was that it would cost more; that probably it could not be done in English oak at any price. The locks and keys and window fastenings are curiously wrought and ornamented, many being very beautiful.

We take a hurried ramble round the quaint old garden, where the golden pippins are lying in the

weeds. Amid the espaliers and the asparagus we note the forgotten herbs. The giant trees are round us, backed by the everlasting hills. The cry of the coots amid the reeds and the cooing of the wood-queece sound soothingly, while above us is the ruin of the stronghold of war.

Very, very reluctantly we rush round the mere, where every leaf is glistening in the sun and doubled by the water. There is no time to dally; another stern race with the great destroyer is before us. We have twenty-two miles to cycle to Shrewsbury, to see the

APPROACH TO STATE BEDROOMS

famous library of chained books at Chirbury, and to have tea, all in three hours. X says if we do the two last we shall miss the train. My reply is, "I would sooner miss anything than tea." He says again, if I get talking with some old parson about those chained books, we shall miss both tea and train. At the Herbert Arms, Chirbury, they promise us tea in ten minutes; while that is brewing and eggs a-boiling we see both books and church, and in half-an-hour we have done well, and are rushing off again. Rain is threatening, time is flying, night is nearing, but, barring accidents, we shall win; and the nineteen miles of good road to

Salop's noted citadel is safely done as two hours are gone, and there is time for tea or cider ere the train is in.

Of course we had no time to study the chained books of Chirbury, but we saw the outsides of them; and as for studying "Calvin on the Minor Prophets," for instance, why, that would give one the blues, if it were not "taken as read." Bishop Jewell's "Defense of his Apologie" happens to be the same as one of the few chained books that were at Didsbury. A black-letter folio of Chaucer, dated 1598, with other ballads, "the hard words of Chaucer explained," and notes, probably by Ed. Herbert, whose autograph is there, should be valuable. Pliny's "Natural History" has notes and the names, "Thos. Corbett. Libris. Ed. Lewis." Plutarch's "Lives," in Greek and Latin columns. Lots of theological works, and the many volumes of sermons, are worth more as curiosities than as butter paper.

There are 207 books dating from 1530 to 1684, many of them still having their chains attached to them. The chains are of iron, two to three feet long, with a swivel and links of about two inches, evidently once fastened to an iron rod.

It is fairly well proved that this library was formed at Montgomery Castle by George Herbert, the poet and divine, there being several signatures of the Herberts in the books; that Izaak Walton, the patron saint of anglers, was wrong (for even saints are wrong at times), when he wrote "the Rebels burnt it"; that the Rev. Edward Lewis, vicar of Chirbury for nearly fifty years, saved it, and kept it in the free schoolhouse which he built in the big churchyard when Montgomery Castle was destroyed. This Parson Lewis, who did these good things, may himself have been called "a Rebel" by the angler with the rod and writhing worm, for the Royalists persecuted him for being a Puritan, and preaching twice on the

Lord's Day. They rode into the church with pistols cocked, and pulled him out of the pulpit, saying if one sermon a day was not enough for the people there now, they should have none. This dangerous Puritan vicar actually gave written leave in 1641, the writing being still preserved, for a man to eat flesh on fast-days, and another parson went to law about the schoolhouse being built on the waste land of the churchyard. These parsons seem to have been as quarrelsome as Æsop's frogs and mice, or even some of our own time. Of the first Lord Herbert of Chirbury—who was married at fifteen, became ambassador to France, wrote many works, leaving eleven volumes of manuscripts to Jesus College, Oxford, and wrote to Prince Rupert that "though it was his ambition to kiss his most valorous and princely hands, yet he could not receive him, for he was newly entered into a course of physic," then gave up his castle to the Parliament, and was shortly after besieged in it by his own son (1644)—there is no room to write here. The archives of deeds, literature, and correspondence of the Herbert family are immense.

# POWYSLAND

## THE PARADISE OF THE CYMRY

IN the preceding pilgrimage we accidentally found the interesting old house Lymore, but could not find any history or mention of it in any book known to me, therefore I wrote to the agent of the Powis estates, asking him for any information. He courteously replied at once, over a signature seven and a half inches long (for I took a two-foot rule to measure it), referring me to the Hon. Secretary of the Powysland Club, who said Lymore and many other interesting places were mentioned in the Montgomeryshire Collections, thirty volumes of which were offered to members of the club for twenty guineas, and suggesting that I might be a member. Thinking that the city should have the volumes for the reference library, I took the letter to the librarian, who told me we already had some odd volumes, and now the rest are bought, so that any one may read them.

Scattered about these books I found several articles on old houses in Powysland, and with the Ordnance map planned a pilgrimage to some of them. We always try to come home at night, but that is difficult if one gets on the Cambrian line. It happened that several of these houses were around Moat Lane Junction, and we might have four hours there. We can do a good deal in four hours, but half-an-hour went with the train being late. Then we found that there was no road from the station. This is literally true as regards wheeled vehicles. There is a footpath by the line for about half a mile, and a

steep bridge over it. We twice lifted our bikes over a wire fence, wheeled them over hedge clippings brown with age that were strewn all over the path, and emerged through a gatekeeper's garden on to a road. I was told there were only two stations in England that had no road to them, and this was one ; but I retorted, this is not in England ; it is in Wales, and probably the other is in Ireland.

When we were dawdling in the train X had innocently asked what became of the old railway carriages, the answer being obvious—if they are not made into henpens they are made into Cambrians. We did enjoy the fresh air and good roads when free to cycle. The land lies high, four or five hundred feet above the sea, therefore the air is sharp and bracing. The hills are fertile and the people few.

We soon came to Caersws, which, according to a Welsh history, was built twenty-two years before Solomon built the temple at Jerusalem, though it is not claimed that he copied the British architect ; sixty-seven years before "the she-wolf's litter" founded the eternal city of Rome ; and a thousand and eighty-six years before the birth of Christ. What a wonderfully long history! If we had known it when we were there we might have been more impressed. It is said that the dirty little station is on a bit of the site of a Roman camp, and the adjacent timber-yard through which we had to take bikes over the line stands where once was a luxurious Roman villa.

Through Caersws and Trefeglwys we found Rhyd-y-Carw. What nice names those are for Christians to pronounce! The last means the ford of the stag, or Hartford, as we should call it. A small and lonely black-and-white house down a very steep and narrow lane, has far-projecting porch with upper storey, a quaint old head above it, worn stone steps with inlaid pebble pavement, where whiter pebbles and longer cobbles

make interlacing curves before the massive door. All the floors are cobbled, and the inmates free from corns and healthy, though in our district e'en a cobbled yard would shock the so-called officers of health.

On the other side the valley is Talgarth, which we must also see, but between us is a deep ravine, where far below the little river Tarannon brawls among the

RHYD-Y-CARW

bushes. Here was the ford of the stag, Rhyd-y-Carw, and X says why should not we ford it instead of going miles round by the road. A muscular female in short skirts and curl-papers offers to show us the way, and lift our bikes or us over the stiles. So we cross a field of the thickest and best short clover I ever saw, drop down a precipitous bank, and find ourselves at the stream where the cattle cross, and a felled fir tree with a handrail makes a bridge. I shouldered my bike and crossed by the tree, scrambling up some nearly perpen-

RHYD-Y-CARW

dicular rocks and thickets beyond. X thought he would be the stag and ford the water, as we have often had to ride through little streams when on our travels. Either the current was too strong for the bike or the stag got floundering on the stepping-stones; for there was a great splash, and I saw something like a mermaid gracefully reclining on the rocks with its nether extremities (I hope that is the proper expression, for some people say it is very improper to write of any one's legs) in the water. Our fair guide—that is, fair in a conventional sense, for she was really as brown as a berry—was delighted. She will enjoy it for years.

X emptied his shoes, threw his spats away, and took off his stockings. In our arguments about the relative merits of boots or shoes he prefers the latter, saying the spats keep out the wet. As he was rather damp we spent little time in photographing Talgarth. Old records say there was a house here in the twelfth century, and the present one, which is now being repaired, was built about three hundred years ago by Edward Lloyd. In 1623 Roger Lloid of Talgarth had to answer "touchinge felloniouse stealinge of one hive of bees" from the garden at Park. It does seem rather risky and hard-up to steal a hive of bees, but it was neither too hot nor too heavy.

Then we fly. X has lately taken to the Oxford fashion of riding bareheaded. This disturbs the country-folks. To-day he goes furiously; the wind in his hair, one stocking on, one stocking off. The little dark Welshwomen, who go grey soon, go greyer when they see him. They clasp their market baskets and mutter a prayer. The Irish harvestmen cross their hairy breasts and wonderingly say "Begorra!" All stare after him until they see the caretaker vainly toiling in the rear. In that favoured land the constable is scarce, and happy are they who never see one.

On the crest of a hill we come to one of those very

TALGARTH

old houses built of oaken boards and timbers, like a barn. Near to it are oaken gates, and through them is a grand view. I feel that we have come to Park, another house where we must call, for the names of those who built and left it add romance to its short history. The site appears to have been part of the plunder of the charities by Henry the Eighth. When his daughter, Elizabeth, came to the throne she became infatuated with the handsome Sir Robert Dudley, who was married to Amy Robsart, as most of us have heard. As Amy took care not to be poisoned, and would not die so that he might marry the Queen, she was found dead at the bottom of the stairs, and her husband would not come to her or her funeral, for there might have been a scene with the corpse, as folk-lorists know.

> "The surest way to chain a woman's tongue
> Is break her neck—a politician did it."

Reports of Dudley's secret marriage with the Queen, and heirs to the throne, inflamed the statesmen against him; but the Queen loaded him with presents, and amongst other vast estates he got this bit near to Caersws, where he built him a house. It is lost in the wilds now; what must it have been with no Cambrian railway crawling along the country? There was some dark design in most things that man did, and here in these lone hills, where no writ ran, what dark deeds were done we shall never know. Enough is known of what he and they did elsewhere: let oblivion brood over those done here, for the curse doubtless stuck on the plunderers of the lands.

As years went on, and the marriage of the Queen to Dudley, now Earl of Leicester, was bitterly opposed, he privately married Lady Sheffield two days before his son was born. Then he tried to poison her, for her nails and hair dropt off. A few more years and he

married Lettice, Countess of Essex, after helping her to poison her husband. The Queen knew of this marriage, said she was heartbroken, and would marry a Frenchman, but took care to lock the Earl up so that the other woman could not have him. After a time she restored him to her favour, and he is said to have advised her to have her great rival, Mary Queen of Scots, privately strangled or poisoned for having blown her husband up with gunpowder; but even Elizabeth recoiled from that. Then the Earl, who was Master of the Horse to the Queen, was poisoned by his wife, who married Sir Christopher Blount, who was his Master of Horse. The folk-lore about folk and horses fits this lot. The Queen promptly grabbed the Earl's estates again, but this place, Park in Montgomeryshire, he had left to University College, Oxford, to educate two poor scholars, and after much litigation the College got it, and have it still. One deed in their archives is signed by R. Essex, L. Leycester, C. Blount. L. Leycester would be the widow of the Earl, and mother to R. Essex; Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, being her son by her former marriage. This lady was believed to have poisoned her first two husbands, and might have treated the third the same. Essex and Blount had their heads chopped off. There were three chops given at the first, and the great Cecil said he was very patient with it. Essex was the man to whom the Queen gave a ring, saying she would forgive him anything if he produced that ring when in trouble; but another woman kept it back till his troubles were ended on the scaffold, and the Queen cursed and cried. Now, the historians say the tale is not true, and very little is true about anything, even about the Queen herself being a pattern of all the virtues. It seems to me, after studying this little history of Park, that our betters were a nice kettle of fish in the glorious days of Good Queen Bess.

As fair a scene as one could wish to see is that which

STAIRCASE OF SOLID OAK AT PARK

A MORE MODERN STAIRCASE CUT FROM SOLID OAK, ABNEY HALL

unrolls itself before the traveller who climbs the hill from Caersws, and passes through the gateway on the ridge to Park. Right and left the pleasant valley stretches far away, with other hills beyond the vale, and here, just below the crest, is the house once built by the voluptuous Earl. Why, and for whom, the master of Kenilworth built on these lone hills there is no record or remembrance. The remains show that it was well done. An enormous stone chimney with some little black-and-white work is all that shows outside; the greater part has been bricked over. Gardens and orchards slope down the steep hillside to big barns and stables far below. Picturesque Scotch firs and yews give dignity to the approach. A flock of forty turkeys is evidently modern, but looks homely and useful.

We are welcomed inside and shown around. The state staircase is very fine and curious. Instead of balusters there have been great oak planks cut into fantastic devices. Even the squared logs for steps are slightly moulded on the risers. Talking of this staircase as being rather unique, X said that the one at his home was cut out of solid oak and richly carved. I had never noticed that, although I had often gone up and down it. The modern one is much grander and more elaborate, though, to our thinking, now rather spoilt with having been polished. If the oak had been left to darken with age it would have looked much better. The only photographs taken at Park were two of the stairs, which are here reproduced as one and contrasted with the staircase at Abney. The lobbies and rooms are panelled with oak, some plain, some ornamented. The drawing-room, with grand oak up to the carved moulding at the ceiling, has been painted mustard colour, very like the colour they daubed over Lady Anne Bland's monument in Didsbury Church at the last alterations. The mantelpiece in another room is wonderfully fine, even to the beards of

the men, as our hostess shows us, but it is far too dark for us to photograph in our short time. In the wall between these two rooms is a secret chamber, and another, we are told, is in the cellar. In two dark

MAESMAWR

passages are sudden drops of stairs that might be yawning for another Amy. What ghosts of jewelled smiling Leicesters, with deadly rapier and deadlier poison, may flit here in the still midnight; or Elizabethan dames, in fantastic frills and stomachers, who, in the glimpses of the moon, gaze again on the scenes of their revels and their hate!

MAESMAWR

Maesmawr Hall is only a few fields distant from the station without a road. Why that station should be called Moat Lane, when it has neither moat nor lane, is not explained to us. As a rule Wales is not short of nice long place-names; it is the pronouncing of them that is the difficulty.

PENARTH

Through big white gates and a long straight avenue we ride to Maesmawr. A gigantic wolf or boar hound comes to see if there is anything to eat. We are kindly received and shown round. Here are two curious staircases, one a very small one and the other massive and elaborate, on opposite sides of the great central chimney-stack. "Sarah Davies, 1764," is scratched on the glass.

PENARTH

We have heard that name before. The timber front is uncommonly and fantastically ornamented. Our usual complaint troubles us, and we hurry to Penarth, another fine black-and-white house, plainer and heavier than Maesmawr. The flat ceiling of the house-place or central hall is mainly held up by one straight beam of oak, probably twenty feet long and nearly two feet square The enormous size and profusion of the oak in most of these old halls is wonderful. Amongst other ancient furniture is a rack filled with the once well-known willow-pattern plates. The farmeress, in broken English, tells of the difficulty of making both ends meet, and asks how I know they make cheese. "Because I smell it." "Cannot you smell my good butter also?" "No; with butter no smell is good smell." This old trade proverb puzzles her, and I refrained from telling her another, which says you should never get your cheese and butter from the same farm, especially in Wales.

# MORE ABOUT POWYSLAND

ON another pilgrimage to Powysland we left the train at Four Crosses, another little station in the fields on the Cambrian line. The name of the station or place seems as far-fetched as that of Moat Lane, for the only cross we could hear of is that one lane crosses another at some distance from the station, and that sort of a cross is very common in lanes.

We asked our way to Penrhos Hall, and near to it turned aside to photograph a farmhouse on the steep hillside that is called Llwyn. It was built in the days when men looked for a big oak with a curving bole, split it in two, and with the opposite sides formed the gable of a house, a single piece of everlasting oak from floor to ridge. In one of these main timbers, which was half a yard in breadth, a very strong swarm of bees had made their hive, just as we saw them at the World's End and Valle Crucis. The front of the house was overgrown with plum trees, and a granary or store-room, made entirely of wood, up a steep flight of stone steps, looks rather Swiss-like, and as if it might have been inhabited some day. There are lots of poultry, turkeys, and pigs wandering about; a broken-legged gander; the horse-leech has come to a lame horse; it is washing day, and they ask us to come in and have some ale, "all as throngt as dogs i dough," as a Cheshire saying describes a very busy day.

Penrhos Hall is one of the most picturesque desolate houses that any one could imagine. It is at the end of a

LLWYN

big field or park where are many fine oaks, which may be the remnant of an avenue. The gate is fastened, but we climb over, and wheel the bicycles over the rich grass. In the derelict porch of the hall a big Shropshire ram stands as sentinel before the front door. I try to remember the words of Scripture about the desolate

LLWYN

habitations being a pasture for flocks, and look up the quotation when I get home, checking it by the revised version which spoils it altogether, for it holds forth about ostriches, jackals, arrowsnakes, and other outlandish creatures. "The palaces shall be forsaken . . . a pasture of flocks . . . there shall come up nettles and brambles . . . it shall be an habitation of dragons and a court for owls; the screech owl shall rest there. There shall the great owl make her nest, and lay and hatch." The

PORCH OF PENRHOS HALL

beautiful hall of Penrhos is forsaken, the flocks are pasturing on the lawn, nettles and brambles are up to one's waist in the courtyard, the glassless windows and tumbling roof are just where owls would like to rest. What has Penrhos or its owner done that it should so literally fulfil the prophetic vision?

The doors are fast, but we can see that inside there are panelled walls and rotting stairs, with all the dirt and debris refuse of a labourer's house, for it had once been let to cottagers, and that is wasteful work where the best carved woodwork burns better than damp sticks. The ruined porch is a great feature, the heavy mullioned windows project over it, and over them again are far-projecting timbers that may have carried a sign or coat-of-arms. The dragon of Wales may have floated there. We saw none of the dragons spoken of by the prophet, though there were some big spiders that if they kept growing would make good dragons.

A picturesque projection is at the end of the house, from which an avenue of yews, perhaps thirty yards long and as high as the ridge of the roof, with interlacing branches overhead, leads to a little house in the garden. These trees are probably coeval with the building, their shade is as dense as a dark church. I regret they were not photographed for their weird look, but X said it was waste of time and plate to take it.

We sat on a stile to eat our lunch, and in the adjoining hedge was another yew, within the reach of cattle and horses on either side. They were all well and hearty; perhaps they were used to it, for as is well known yew is often poisonous. We were told Lord Harlech owns the place. A man named Derwas, somewhere described as John ap Owen, alias Derwas, built it, and had a brother Hugh living at Llwyn about the same time. In beautifully-carved letters on one gable is the date 1607. Who was this Owen who took the

PENRHOS HALL

strange name of Derwas? Was he one of those pirates or patriots of Queen Elizabeth's time, who enriched themselves and their country by plundering from the Spaniard the spoils of Chili and Peru? Many are the grand old houses all over our land that went up when times were good, when ships came ballasted with gold and jewels three hundred years ago.

About two miles from Penrhos Hall is a farmhouse named Trederwen, which is in two parishes, the older timber-built part being in Llandrinio, the other in Guilsfield. The older part seems to be propped up by a pear tree, which was trained against the porch gable many years ago, and now holds up that end of the house. After a hurried photograph we settle down for a good spin southwards—that is, up the valley of the Severn towards Welshpool, which is here called Pool. At Poolquay, once considered to be the highest navigable point of the Severn, the road, the river, and the rail, almost touch one another; and a glimpse of the twisting river, running yellow with the mud of heavy rain, through green pastures and golden corn, round the serrated peaks of the Breidden Hills, which now are wrapped in misty bluish haze, is very fine. We had never ridden round these hills before, and had no idea they were so beautiful. Precipitous and well-wooded rocks rise a thousand feet above the rolling Severn, and, apart from other hills, the claim that here was the last stand of Caractacus against the Romans seems well proved; for though other hills may be called Caradoc and have their legends, the written words of the Roman historian Tacitus describe the greatest and desperate struggle Ostorius had with the British Silures in the country of the Ordovices, or North Welsh, in a high mountain, encompassed with a dangerous river, and only here are the mountain and the river worthy of their name.

A little farther on there is a bridge across the

Severn, and turning to our left we find a place called Buttington, calm and sleepy now, where we may loiter in the church and inn, but where, a thousand years ago, the

TREDERWEN

corpses lay in heaps, for here Christian met heathen in one of those savage slaughters where mercy is neither asked nor given. "Death was the foeman's hail. Death without quarter." It is strange that this decisive defeat of the Danes should have been fought so near to

where Caractacus made his last stand against the Romans.

In the days of good King Alfred, A.D. 894, the Danes, under Haestan, left Beamfleet in Essex, plundered all up the Thames and then up the Severn. Ethelred and Ethelnoth joining the North Welsh came up with them at "Buttingtune," where the Severn becomes more of a mountain stream. "There they beset them about on either side in a fastness. When they had now sat there many weeks on both sides of the river then were the enemy distressed for want of food, and having eaten a great part of their horses and being starved with hunger, then went they out against the men who were encamped on the east side of the river and fought against them, and the Christians had the victory. Ordheh, a king's thane, was slain; and of the Danes there was great slaughter made, and that part which got away thence was saved by flight." Some of them went at one stretch, day and night, until they arrived at a western city in Wirral, which is called Legaceaster (Chester).

Then, as years went on, the flesh of the heathen rotted from their bones, and other Christians built the abbey of Ystrad Marcella near by, and then a church on the site of the camp of the Danes at Buttington, where they collected the bones their forefathers had starved and the skulls they had broken, and made little pits, with the arms and legs holding up the sides, skulls in the middle, taking care the skulls should face the east, which was very thoughtful of them, for perhaps after all there may have been some among them as good Christians as they were themselves, and all should be fairly dealt with. Then they put the fingers and toes and teeth and other bits in odd pits, just as they do now when they disturb churchyards, and forgot all about them. Quietly they rested for more centuries, but in our day a school was wanted near the church, and the builders came into these

TREWERN HALL

pits of bones, cartloads of bones, hundreds of skulls, some badly cracked, and teeth that sold readily at sixpence each, as cures for the toothache. An ash-tree root had grown up the marrow of a man's thigh and welded bone and wood together solid.

The inn by the church commemorates the dragon standard of Wales. Perhaps the standard was planted

TREWERN HALL

on its site, but it was the smell of brewing that drew us thither. We asked for cider, but to me it seemed like ale, for the smell of home-brewed permeated all. We also asked the way to Trewern, but the directions seemed as mixed as the ale. With the natives Trewern rhymes to "brown," and we were told that to get to Tudors o Trown we must go a few miles on the road but not pass a public-house, and turn to the left before we got there. If we were not to pass a public-house how should we get home? And, if we were to turn to the left before we got there, we should keep on turning.

KITCHEN, TREWERN HALL

It seemed puzzling, but we could learn no more, and would evidently need all our wits to find the place, when actually X wanted more cider.

We did find Trewern Hall, and were told we had gone over Offa's Dyke without knowing it. I wondered whose fault that was. This beautiful old black-and-white hall is at the foot of the majestic Breidden Hills, and near by the Severn. It is dated 1610, with the initials R. F. over the porch. The carved posts at the entrance must have been about two feet square. The large hall has had many alterations. Formerly it had seven doors, and a window containing 542 panes of glass, for a piece of it has been kept as a specimen. There is now plain glass put into the old oak mullions. The kitchen is also a big room, with a pillar in the middle, and large fireplace and oven. After "siding" the things, a photograph of this came out fairly well. We were trying to earn our tea, which was kindly provided. No one seems to know whose initials are over the porch. Two hundred years ago some Gerards owned the small estate of Trewern Hall. Then it changed hands continually, and there were many years of litigation about it. Now, we were told, it is owned by some one who lives in Canada.

The weather, that had been wet for some days, gradually cleared, and for our evening's ride to Shrewsbury we had the perfection of cycling. Sun and wind behind us, good roads below us, fine air and scenery. The precipitous crags of the Breiddens were alongside, but when clear of them we looked back to the setting sun, five or seven ranges of hills were ablaze with golden light to the north of west—the stormy hills of Wales. What a scene was that, over those old battle-fields and that rich country, to the dazzling glory which crowned and veiled the Cymry's stronghold, Snowdon.

# ARLEY HALL

THERE is a bit of Cheshire known as the land of the rhyming signposts. A stranger travelling through the country lanes round Arley sees signposts which have blossomed into poetry, and if he does not smile aloud he wonders what has been to do with the surveyor of the district or the County Council. Do the highways committee in solemn conclave assembled compose poetry, or is that the work of a "fresh" surveyor? The lines are really the product of the late Squire of Arley, who amused himself with making rhymes and fixing them up in all sorts of places, or composing hunting-songs for evening convivalities.

The home of the Warburtons for many centuries of unbroken male descent has been Arley Hall. Before that they were Duttons, who settled at Warburton, assuming the local name, and now, according to the common rule they should be Egertons. Without guessing too far into the unknown past, or writing the usual rubbish about "coming over with the Conqueror," for all these names are thoroughly Saxon, it may be noted that in Domesday mention is twice made of Warburgetone, the name being evidently derived from St. Werburge, who was one of the holy virgins we hear of in olden times, and to whom the great abbey of Chester was dedicated. In very early days there was a church at Warburton and a priory of Premonstratensians: there is a nice long name for folks when the whole parish for ages afterwards was only rated at twelve shillings a year.

There is an ancient timber-built church there now

which is worth seeing and photographing. It stands on the bank of the Mersey, for well I knew the sight and smell of that sweet stream again. Some years ago, when writing of Didsbury, and trying to learn if the tide ever came up so far in the days of salmon-fishing, I was told by men likely to know, that before the Ship Canal was made a high tide would reach Warburton. This old

WARBURTON CHURCH

church—of timber, stone, and brick ; the timber being the oldest, the stone dated 1645, the brick the newest—is well kept, and the graveyard is still used ; but service is held in a new church, a handsome stone one built by the Squire out of the rents his tenants paid for shooting rights. This is as it should be. Keep the old where it is, and as it is. Build anew near by. If others had done the same, what a wealth of fine old buildings there would be about the land that have been utterly ruined.

There was another peculiarity about this church or rectory that should be noted. An old Cheshire saying,

WARBURTON OLD CHURCH

where anything was very difficult to tear asunder or to separate, was, "It is like tearing Lymm from Warburton." From the time of the Conquest the rectorship of Lymm was held in two halves. More than two hundred years since the historian Leycester wrote, "One parson has one Sunday, the other parson the next Sunday, and so by course," the tithes being divided. One of these half parsons was nominated by the Warburtons, who always nominated the same man to be rector of Warburton, a very inconvenient arrangement as any one with any knowledge of parsons would know, but it existed until 1869, and now Lymm is torn from Warburton. I have heard of a Warburton being unseated at a fence when hunting, and as his leg was on one side the fence and his body on the other, still entangled with the horse, it was feared the limb would be torn from Warburton.

Arley Hall is about six miles to the south of the place whence the family take their name. By the lane side at High Legh are ancient stocks where for the first time X tries what he might have had to try if he had lived in the olden time, and had not always been so good. Behind the fence, embowered in splendid trees, on the margin of a wide-spreading lawn, where wave the plumes of pampas grass, there stands another curious old chapel. This has been restored recklessly, not in the cheap and ugly manner that is common, but reckless as to cost and magnificence. Wonderfully carved oak all around, with choir stalls, rood screen and cross, many-tinted glass both old and new, and fount inlaid with showy marbles. One old window, or part of it, does commemorate the founder, Thomas Legh, of High Legh, and his wife Isabella, the heir of Trafford of "Garet" (Manchester), with their arms emblazoned on their mantles, the date being 1581. The whole place is very small but very grand. It is virtually in the garden of the East Hall. Some one has evidently very high and ornate tastes and the means to gratify them. A priest in the garb of a monk even to

ARLEY HALL

cassock and sandals, comes in, but he does not look as if he mortified the flesh.

"In Cheshire Leghs are thick as fleas." Here at High Legh we are in the midst of them. Those at East Hall are Leghs; at West Hall, Leighs. There are any amount of branches up and down the country. Common folk, who spell their names Lee or Lea, may even be humble relations, but if any one wishes to harmlessly insult one of the reigning houses they should spell their name in the way it should not be spelt.

A little farther down the lane we come to the first of the rhyming signposts:—

> This road forbidden is to all
> Unless they wend their way to call
> At mill or green or Arley Hall.

As we have the autograph of the Squire in our pocket we go down this forbidden road, although it needs very careful steering, for big stones are placed on it at various angles. At the mill is a pedlar who wants to take his cartload of very miscellaneous merchandise still farther, and says he "mun ar brass from someweers." When we tell him he has dropt some of his baskets in the lane he swears at large and curses all things. Perhaps the poor old mule will suffer for it, but what could he hope to sell at the stately hall of Arley?

The Green is like one of those fancy greens we see in picture-books or on Christmas cards. It is a large space of beautiful greensward, where the children can play on real grass, climb real trees, and tumble into real water, for the mere extends from the mill past the green and on towards the hall, perhaps a mile in length. The school-house has been made out of one of the big old barns, with great oak timbers and heavy grey slates on roof. The adjoining houses have been built to look alike. All are now clad in ivy, jessamine, or clematis, and there are actually wagtails and fly-catchers' nests on the very walls and roof of the school. I can testify to the nests;

ARLEY GREEN

some of them had squalling youngsters in, which would be very disturbing to the poor boys at their lessons. I once found fault with a boy (the son of a servant) for not doing something he had been told to do, and his excuse was that he always forgot except when he was in school, and then they would not let him go to do it.

It is not known when the Warburtons settled at Arley; but in 1360 Galfrido de Werburghton had a licence for

ARLEY MILL

an oratory there, so it is almost certain a hall existed previously. In 1469 "Wise" Piers, or Peter, rebuilt the hall and chapel. This Piers was a retainer of the Stanleys, and probably, like his overlords, got richer after Bosworth fight. His son John was "the wighty Warbartone out of Chesshire," mentioned in a poem on Flodden. The new hall of Peter was quadrangular, timber built, and surrounded with a moat, as was the custom in those days. Its great hall still exists within the present one. In 1758 this picturesque and beautiful old house was encased with common brick, and spoilt of

ARLEY SCHOOL

course, although in Ormerod's time the quad enclosed a court, round which there was an open colonnade decked with parterres of flowers. Then in 1833 all was demolished, and the present house, stately and grand, arose in its stead.

The late squire, Rowland E. Egerton-Warburton, wrote many things, among them being "A Looking-glass for Landlords," which is full of excellent advice in verse. From it we may gather that he was almost compelled to rebuild the old house, and possibly could not get oak enough to build as he wanted.

> With ruthless haste
> Let not old building in the dust be laid.
> But, if by evil fate compelled,
> . . . . . .
> Turn not its aspect from the southern sun.
> . . . . . .
> However cheap, whate'er is bad eschew,
> Let all be real; all be strictly true.

There are minute directions given for the various rooms, gardens, parks, woods, and roads. Even to what is to be put into them. Very sound and amusing advice. For instance, you must be very stern and stubborn here :—

> Howe'er importunate the tenant's prayer,
> Strip not with axe the timbered hedgerow bare;
> Where else for shelter from the mid-day heat,
> Or driving rain-storm, can the herd retreat?
> Shame be to those who taxed our English oak.

Folk-lore and new ideas as to things are beautifully mixt.

> That cow milks best which finds a rush to bite.
> . . . . . .
> Each freckling daisy, from the grassplot mown;
> . . . . . .
> The fragrant lily, loveliest queen of flowers;
> Choice herbs, once held by housewives in esteem.

Although the old squire did not die soon after he built his new house as folk-lore teaches us, the builders

GATEHOUSE TO STABLE-YARD, ARLEY

of grand houses generally do, yet the satiety or melancholy of age must have come strongly over him, for he wrote—

> "Before my hall I stood; with sated eye
> And heavy heart upon the pile I gaz'd,
> Which care, and cost, and years of toil had rais'd
> From turret's base to glittering vane on high.
> Cold critics came, well pleas'd its faults to spy,
> Those very faults which smooth-tongued flattery prais'd,
> While country folk stood silent and amaz'd,
> 'All,' my heart whisper'd, 'all is vanity.'"

Over the portal of the house is the notice—

> This gate is free to all good men and true;
> Right welcome thou if worthy to pass through.

Fully conscious of our own unworthiness, but hoping, as men usually hope, that we are no worse than other sinners, we enter, and see the biggest coat of arms I ever saw. The rampant lions of the Egertons fighting amid the darts of the wicked, and the cormorants of the Warburtons, hungry beasts and hungry birds all mixed in a bewildering tangle, seem to have frightened the Saracen whose head is the crest, for his hair stands up in ostrich feathers. I have not learnt what he commemorates: perhaps the tale is left untold, like "the legend of Cambuscan bold."

The master was not the only literary character, for the housekeeper, Mrs. Elizabeth Raffald, wrote a good book on cookery as well as a directory. The family portraits are fine, and also the panelling of home-grown oak. Near to the stable-yard is a vast barn, now used as a riding-school, which is made of enormous oaks that are reared up from the ground to the ridge of the roof. It is believed to be five hundred years old, and the massive timbers are still sound and good.

The gardens are laid out in many styles, being divided by varied hedges or by walls, with curious summer-houses in between. One long vista of clipt yews, stretching to the distant park, and a sunken bowling-green hemmed in with thick yew hedge, would take most people's

THE ANCIENT BARN AT ARLEY

fancy. Here is an intricate maze, and on the sod beneath the shade are grave-stones with epitaphs :—

Restor'd to life were Marigold, my mare,
'Mid all the flowers which deck this garden fair
Not one in beauty could with her compare.
. . . . . .
I laid his bones beneath the greenwood tree
And wept like childhood o'er my A B C.

As none of the rhyming squire's hunting-songs have been mentioned, and one on "Hard-riding Dick" used to jingle in my ears when a youth, let me quote :—

The life of poor Dick when he entered his teens,
Was to sleep in the hay-loft and breakfast on beans.
. . . . . .
Three ribs hath he broken, two legs, and one arm.
But there hangs, it is said, round his neck a life charm ;
Still long odds are offer'd that Dick, when he drops,
Will die, as he lives, in his breeches and tops.

CLIPT YEWS, ARLEY HALL

# CAUS CASTLE—MARCHE MANOR —OLD PARR

AS the name of Dieulacres Abbey often puzzled my early readings of Cheshire history, so did that of Caus Castle in the History of Shropshire. The names looked foreign and the places were unknown to me. There are few Norman names in our part of England, but these are of them, and the places have not prospered. Perhaps if they had prospered the names would have been more Anglicised. X claimed Caus as one of the homes of his ancestors, and therefore it must be found even if we got lost in the hills and had to stay out all night.

Arrived at Shrewsbury we found a local train would take us some miles farther into the country to the west It stopped at a place called Minsterley, as if it could get no farther, and there is a black-and-white hall where lives the agent of the Marquis of Bath, in whose garden we set up the camera close to a peach tree that was laden with fruit, and they were not the well-known variety named Royal George. In the spoilt church hang maidens' garlands, or love tokens. A road-mender shows us a wooded ridge about two miles away, where stands all that is left of Caus. He tells us of two routes to get there, one through the fields and woods, the other a mile or two farther by the lanes. Roadmen or highwaymen, unlike their namesakes of old, are generally good persons from whom to ask one's way.

We try the first, then go by the second. At Castle

Farm, on a long hill, we ask a herdsman for the castle, who tells us in local English, "It's a steepish pitch, but yo mun owd up th' rack an' roun by th' coppy, an' yo'll getten theer."

We leave "them things," that is bikes, in a calf-cote, asking him to mind the pigs do not eat them, for there are swine all about the place, and if some became premature pork through eating our tyres, the simple farmers might want heavy damages. We have to climb over fastened gates, and up a steep path in the woods, until we stand on a precipitous conical mound, where remnants of masonry are all overgrown with wild peas or vetches in great profusion of pods.

From the topmost peak there is a fine view over the great plain of Salop, to where the Wrekin dimly rears its lonely height. Nearer at hand is the long range of the Stiperstones, once a chase for Saxon kings. Where the grey spoils of rubbish show for miles that mining has been done, there have been found pigs of lead stamped with the superscription of the Cæsars. The august Emperor Hadrian heaped up riches, and the seed of his barbarians treasure them as curiosities to look at, not as objects of art or value, but for the sake of his imperial mark. Round to the west are the mountain strongholds of Powysland, and on that side the castle lacks the commanding site of Montgomery. By far the greatest work, that still endures all the wear and tear of ages, is the well. The top of it is some yards square, lined with masonry as far as can be seen, and its depth must be very great to go anywhere near the brook below the hill. At the present day it would be a wonderful work to construct, but in those days it would be a necessity, for water was all-important in a siege, where cattle, the wealth of the country, were always driven within the castle walls for safety when a border raid was on.

MINSTERLEY HALL

Among the followers of Roger de Montgomery was another Roger, probably a kinsman, from Pays de Caux, in Normandy. This one was nicknamed Corbet, or Corbie the raven. To help his lord against the Welsh he built this castle here, and called it after his Norman home. The Corbets were named the Warden of the Host against the Welsh, and the family increased and multiplied exceedingly. Eyton says no present Corbet can have come from any later Baron than he of 1222; therefore, their exact affinity must be the work rather of a magician than an antiquary, but as some of these Normans were proud of holding the office of "camerarius," which any schoolboy would translate as holder of the camera, there is here reproduced a snapshot of one of the tribe when on the very summit of the castle's mound he was calmly considering the value of the stranger's lands around him.

Here is a very interesting bit I ferreted out, a special Act referring doubtless to the district round. A patent of the King, dated 4th of May 1281, that is, two years before the Parliament met at Acton Burnell, informs all his officers that Peter Corbet of Caus is commissioned to destroy all wolves, and they are to assist with dogs and other devices. In our school days we were taught that wolves were extinct in England long before this date, but in the wild borderland they must have lingered much longer, and been too plentiful, or there would have been no special command to destroy—not merely to hunt them. The sheep dogs in the neighbourhood even now look little different from wolves. They would not change and become civilised as soon as their masters, for with the dogs inbreeding would last longer and be closer. Elsewhere I find that about this time the wolves pulled down a buck on Cannock Chase, which was eaten by lepers.

After a long climb down the underwood from the

castle top to the farm below, which is on a high hill, we have a fine roll down to Westbury, where in the inn are many well-set-up specimens of falcons, capercailzie, game-cocks, and other birds. A puncture and refreshment delay us; then, winding up and down and roundabout through many lanes, we come again nearly to the bottom

of Caus Castle hill, nearly to where we were, after many miles of wandering. Our map had marked the place, but in these wild districts we cannot always trust to maps, and often there is not any one from whom to ask the way.

Marche Manor is a charming old house, rather small compared to many of the country houses, but not perhaps the worse for that. The moat is mostly dry with

picturesque sedges; the adjacent farmstead roomy and elaborately rebuilt. Inside the house is excellently furnished, the windows long and low, with lattice panes. The panelled walls, the beams above and floors below are all of polished oak, as are the stairs and finely carved ornamental mantelpiece. There is the old high table with dais seat. A panelled chair, and, most curious of all to us, a curved settle, from whose back a lid lets down to form a little table whereon to put your glasses or your cards.

From this well-furnished nest we soon get to the Welshpool and Shrewsbury road at a place called Wollaston, near to where old Parr, of "Life Pill" fame, is said to have come from. Parr is supposed to be the oldest man who ever lived, barring Methuselah and a few of his kindred who do not count with us. He was covered with hair, and the envy of kings, for his fame was derived from having children when over a hundred years old. His history is said to be engraven on brass and in the church, so it must be true, if we had not been told more than once, even by sextons, that they will put up anything in a church if it is well paid for. The various accounts of him are so absurdly conflicting as to figures, dates, and kings, that any one who wishes to get at the truth will find very little. To put the case as shortly as possible, it would appear to me to be somewhat as follows:—

In the time of the Stuarts it was noised about in London that a man named Thomas Parr, who was over a hundred years old, and a woman named Katherine Milton had done penance for a base child in Alberbury Church, Shropshire. King Charles was so jealous of Parr that he sent for him, and Parr was made a show, one of the fashionable sights of London. This soon killed him, and a Dr. Hervey was called to make a post-mortem examination; possibly some assurance as

MARCHE MANOR

to age was wanted. The doctor cautiously and properly reported that Parr might have lived a great while longer if he had not come to London. This is the only scientific evidence, and it indicates that Parr was not a very old man. The Church registers give no record about him, and they might have mentioned the penance. "It's a wise child that knows its own father;" and there may have been a mistake even there. Let us hope the young lady was not a connection of the poet Milton, whose family probably come from Milton, in Cheshire, which is not far away. The wonderful histories about Parr are taken from the narrative of Taylor, the showman and poet. These histories were enlarged, idealised, and spread broadcast over the earth to advertise some miraculous pills which were invented the year that I was born, by two enterprising youths, who out of them made an immense fortune. Although the older histories said that Parr was never ill and lived to 152, a newly-found "will" left, as a treasure to his great grandson (though he never had one), an herb mixture which had cured Parr of bloody-flux, King's-evil, or anything else. Multitudes have swallowed the pills, hoping that they also might have eternal youth, and multitudes have swallowed the pills, although they could not gulp the greater pill of Parr's age. If they had reflected for one brief moment they might have thought

CHAIR AND HELMET

what would be the good of living one hundred and fifty years. Most folks are better gone long before they are that age. When some kind friend sends me stuff warranted to cure the ills that flesh is heir to, it seems unkind to throw it to the dogs, as the great poet tells us, therefore I carefully bury it in the garden.

HYDE HALL, DENTON

SIR JOHN DE PICHFORD

# PITCHFORD HALL

HIDDEN away in a recess in the low hills to the south of Shrewsbury there is one of the most charming homes it has been our lot to find where'er we roam. An old home never bought and never sold, unspoilt by the restorer, unsullied by the ignorant rich, undesecrated by the hateful hammer of the auctioneer, where the treasures of bygone generations are still treasured by those who come after, the homely furniture that has outlasted the wear and tear of ages, the hereditary armour, the trophies of sport, the pictures that are not only works of art but vivid illustrations of English history, of the dresses and manners of generations of Englishmen who lived and died in this the lovely home of their fathers.

Pitchford has its name from a bituminous or pitchy well, noted in its earliest records. Why we should insert the useless letter *t* in pitch is one of those little follies unexplained to us. At the great survey the place was even then of some importance, for it had five ox-teams and pannage for a hundred swine. Then its record is almost blank for two hundred years, when in the winter time men felled one of its gigantic oaks, which had probably been growing there for a thousand years, and yearly helping to fatten its share of the swine. This enormous bole of winter-felled oak was made by cunning craftsmen into a coffin, a work of art and heraldry, and the likeness of a man in full panoply of war, the last Pichford who died Lord of Pichford. All that may be seen to-day, for on his oaken tomb his oaken effigy lies, full seven feet in length, with fine cut

PITCHFORD HALL, THE (PRESENT) FRONT DOOR

PITCHFORD HALL, THE REMNANT OF THE MOAT

features, clad in mail armour, with enormous, almost exaggerated right arm and right hand grasping the hilt of his heavy sword, his legs crossed in mystic symbolism. The heart of native oak which forms this splendid work of art is more sharply cut to-day than if the image had been chiselled in marble. Salopia's historian Eyton considers that by the shields of arms there plainly shown this effigy should be of Sir John de Pichford, who ceased to be the Lord of Pichford in 1285. The first and third shields being Pichford, the second Devereux, the fourth Baskerville. They and others can be plainly seen in our little memento. It was almost with awe and bated breath we sat on the altar steps and stretched out the camera's tripod to take the likeness of the grim old warrior, but he never stirred. We could hear our watches tick and our hearts beat as the seconds slowly slipped into minutes, and the minutes dragged away in the ancient church's dim religious light. He still gazed steadily upward as if he waited for the sound of the trumpet, and on tiptoe we crept quietly away as if we feared to disturb that last long sleep.

Another spell of nearly two hundred years rolls away with nought of interest to tell, until in 1473 one Ottley. Sheriff of the County, here built himself a house, and that also may be seen to-day, that is, seen by those who are worthy to see it, for the cheap-tripper who sucks bottles and oranges had better keep away, it would be desecration to admit the abomination here. To us it seemed almost a crime to go on bicycles and ring a bell, especially when the handle of the bell would have made an excellent mace. The only proper way to visit here is on horseback, on eager hunter or on stately charger. But our horsey days are over. Big Sir John de Pichford would have smote on the nail-studded door with the hilt of his gigantic sword; or Sir Francis Ottley's squire would have blown a blast to rouse the echoes round and bring the feudal henchmen rushing

PITCHFORD HALL, THE FORMER FRONT

out. The glamour and romance of the past are gone. We meekly rang and waited, but the state of the steps caused me to look up, and there under the jutting eaves above were eight martin's nests, all in a row, full of little martins looking down on us, with others flying round about, and all twittering laughter at such queer new-fangled things as bikes. As at Macbeth's castle, long ago, Banquo said :—

> "This guest of summer,
> The temple-haunting martlet, does approve
> By his lov'd mansionry that the heaven's breath
> Smells wooingly here : no jutty frieze,
> Buttress, nor coigne of vantage, but this bird
> Hath made his pendent bed and procreant cradle.
> Where they most breed and haunt, I have observ'd
> The air is delicate."

That is very good observation. Our little house-martins need not only delicate air for their tiny prey, but good marl or clay for their nests of mud, and that the rich soil of Shropshire gives them. As editions of Shakspere vary I looked up the first Folio to verify my quotations, and found that in this one the word martlet was Barlet. If we write it marlet, the bird that marls its nest, there is a good derivation for the name. "Jutty frieze" should probably be "jutting frieze," or "jutting eaves."

On page 13 is another variation which was prematurely printed. Where King Richard orders "Off with his head," the word instantly is not in the first Folio.

Inside the hall, where the generations of cavaliers, sportsmen, and statesmen are watching from the panelled walls, the spell and feeling of the past grow stronger. Who is this gay cavalier with his wife and children all in gorgeous attire? It is a beautiful work of art by Petrus Troueil, a pupil of Vandyck's, dated 1636, containing portraits of Sir Francis Ottley, the Governor of Shrewsbury for the King in the Civil War, his wife, and children, their ages being given—43, 35, 11, and 7. Would it be wicked to photograph it? Under it, in the oaken mantelpiece, is cut the Norman motto,

PITCHFORD HALL, SIR FRANCIS OTTLEY AND FAMILY

"Oblier ne Doy" (Forget not the right). Permission is given, and the thing is done. A lovely picture of a family party in the best dress and fashion of the time: all decked in lace and finery, in jewels and embroidery, the picture of high-born health and happiness, before their troubles came. A gallant cavalier in the prime of life, with heavy two-handed sword, and moustache and pointed beard to match. His hair is fine and quite in keeping with the rest. it hangs in massive curls nearly to his shoulders, cut across in fringe above his eyes and somewhat hiding where the brains should be, but brains were only wasted in the service of his King.

Round about the panelled hall and in adjoining rooms, all framed in oaken wainscot, are generations of Ottleys and their tribe. Most of them are named and dated, so that he who runs may read. Here over a doorway is one who looks more sad and serious, with a book it may be of prayers in his hand; he is more of the Puritan, and is named Sir William Willoughby. Coming nearer to our own times are two of Lord Liverpool, the Prime Minister; in one he looks excited, in the other, by Sir Thomas Lawrence, calm and happy. In the place of honour in the drawing-room is a full-length portrait of Prince Rupert, which tradition says was sent here as a present by the prince himself, but to me it lacks the fire and the dash that were all that once dreaded prince had wherewith to plume himself.

The library is dated 1626, and some of the furniture is dated also. It is a pity this good old custom of dating things has lapsed. A chair is dated 1652, with the initials C. F. Another 1741, and a fine screen in the hall is inscribed E. C. A. C. 1584. A very deeply-cut chest is probably far older, for it looks as if it might have been part of the spoils of some rich abbey. China and silver and curiosities abound; in modern treasures are a harp and a signed book that were given to the owner's mother by Queen Victoria when she stayed

SUMMER HOUSE IN TREE

PITCHFORD HALL FROM BY THE HOUSE IN THE TREE

PITCHFORD CHURCH

in the house in her younger days. Perhaps the most interesting room to me was the secret hiding-hole: they could not show us the ghost, but they did explain the mystery of the secret chamber. All the rooms are panelled in oak from floor to ceiling, and in one bedroom a certain stile in the panel will slide, if pressed, and allow a piece of the panelling to open like a door. Then there is disclosed a hidden room, perhaps six feet square, without light or air. If the door be shut, a trap in the oaken floor, three inches thick, will lift, and there, behold, is a steep flight of steps down to another tiny room. The floor of this lower room is modern, so we cannot tell exactly how it was arranged originally. There may have been a way of escape underground, although outdoor exits were liable to betray themselves. There still are marks in the wall showing where food could have been passed from a cupboard in the drawing-room below. This untouched, original, secret chamber is very interesting, and the way in which a part of the panelling, exactly like that which surrounds it and is in all the rooms of the house, opens, when a certain bit of it is moved, was so ingenious that I copied it for the entrance to our hiding-hole at this Old Parsonage, Didsbury, where we keep the apples and drink, but found it was not adapted for everyday use.

There are other curiosities about Pitchford Hall, for on a knoll between the house and garden, in a wide-spreading very ancient lime-tree, is another little house built among the branches. This sylvan retreat or arbour was mentioned in writings more than two hundred years since, and is a wonderfully pleasant place from which to view the country round. It may originally have been partly designed as a watch-tower in troublous times, and gradually come to be a happy place in days of ease. We thought we should like to stay there all night, or have afternoon tea. I noticed the tree was full of mistletoe, which is not commonly found on the

FONT AT CONDOVER

linden, though others near by had some also. A limb of this tree containing 150 feet of timber fell in 1823, and in 1856 another nearly as large. One of the big chimney-stacks of the house has a tree growing out of it, which spreads above the chimney like an umbrella, to keep off the rain. Another small thing worthy of note is the steep grey roof of the little church adjoining the hall. This is probably of stone, but every bit is covered with grey lichen or the more showy grey stonecrop, or white sedum, interspersed here and there with polypody fern. On the pool above, the water lilies lie, and every leaf of luxuriant vegetation is reflected in the still waters when the coots and ducks are quiet. Enormous trees of varied sorts and patriarchal age encircle all with grateful shade, and in the distance rises Shropshire's sacred mount, the Wrekin.

# TREAGO CASTLE—WYTHALL

READERS of our former pilgrimages may remember that when in Herefordshire at midsummer we had on two consecutive evenings come to fine old houses that we were not allowed to photograph. Three months elapsed before we could get the requisite permission and were free to go again. On the last Saturday in September, in the gloomy weather that had prevailed all the summer, we cycled to Stockport as usual for the 8.45 express to Hereford. Soon after noon we were cycling through the quaint old city, o'er its streets so fine and broad and so intensely narrow. Along the Monmouth road the pace was good until the long ascent of Aconbury Hill, up which we toiled above a mile. A short halt was made for lunch where a heap of broken stones looked comparatively soft and dry. Near by was a beautiful place with the beautiful name of Wormelow Tump. It may be an aristocratic occupation here to sit by the roadside eating, for a smart dogcart came past and the groom touched his hat as if he thought we were gentlemen. Then an accident happened which might have been serious.

We were going down a long steep hill where by the roadside was a herd of many swine feeding. Two big old razor-backed sows with many grades of porkers with them. X led the way, and I cautiously followed. His good luck has always been wonderful and he got safely past, but the pigs winded him and snorted. They may have known all about that herd of swine spoken

TREAGO CASTLE

TREAGO CASTLE

of in the Scriptures, into which the devils entered when the whole herd ran violently down a steep place and were choked; for they seemed to think "here are two more devils about to enter into us," and they rushed violently down the steep place and into me. It was only by the greatest wrench of the bike that I missed one of the "milky mothers of the herd" in her hippopotamus hide, only to ride right over the fat belly of one of her beloved youngsters, promptly turning it into bacon, and banging into another which threw my machine upright again, for the pedal had come with a crash to the ground. A third seemed to strike the hind wheel, and just as I gave myself up for lost and expected the old sows would be taking their revenge on me for the quantities of their kindred that I had eaten, the steepness of the hill saved me, for the bike rushed off downhill at a furious pace. My feet were off the pedals, but I had stuck to the handles, to each of which is a brake, and I had just enough wits left to steer straight and slow down for the next ascent.

Then X wanted to know what was the matter with the pigs, and thought we ought to go back and pay for any damage. But I wanted to know who would have paid me if they had eaten me and my bike; besides, there was no precedent in Scripture for paying for the pigs, even when they were all choked. It does seem hard lines on that Gadarene farmer, but in our case we had not entered into the swine, though they might have liked us. We had preserved our neutrality, and would abide by the lessons of Holy Writ.

Shortly after this little escapade the lofty tower of a fine church comes into view. It is about a mile ahead, due south, and across a deep valley. The village itself is called St. Weonards, and from its centre there goes down a lane so steep we dare not ride. For hundreds of yards we walk down a straight steep road where children are gathering nuts and blackberries. The trees

TREAGO CASTLE

increase in numbers and in size, and gradually winding down into a secluded leafy dell, we come to the very ancient picturesque house once known as Treago Castle.

Outside the gate is a fox-terrier, and inside are two foxhound puppies. They are very quiet under some trees, and therefore have evidently been in mischief. The name of one of them is Tortoise, for some one calls it, and the name cannot have been given on account of its pace, but more likely from its tortoise-shell colour. Then a bulldog comes and two more terriers. A cat sits on the wall by the house. It is not going to venture far with all those dogs about. It is lucky to be alive, for we hear more dogs and begin to think of our own safety, and wonder which is the front door, for in these castles or old houses it is sometimes doubtful.

We are welcomed inside and shown a very interesting place. It is said to be one of the oldest houses in England, having been first built in the reign of Stephen. Very little good was done in that reign, and to me it seemed very similar to the ruined castle of Acton Burnell (pictured in my last book), where the first Edward summoned his first Parliament. The original square castle, with a round tower at each angle, remains. The south-east tower has had a large cap added to it, which may have been for purposes of defence, but which now makes a very pleasant room. The interior was an open courtyard, where cattle could be secured in times of border raids. There was and still is a well of water in the centre, plenty of water being a great necessity when nought might venture out. The courtyard is now covered in, and the beasts only come when cooked and on the table. In former days there were no windows but to the court, there being mere slits or oeillets on the outside, through which the archers might shoot, and with stone seats on which to rest. Some of the walls are six feet or more thick, and the floors of different levels, for in one room I noticed a few stairs, semi-

TREAGO CASTLE

circular and with handrailing, giving access to another door with very singular effect.

At the very top of one of the corner towers is a tiny secret chamber in the wall. It is only a few feet square, but has a little fireplace or flue, a very small window, and a desk which closes up into the wall. It was discovered from the room below about sixty years since, for the doorway had been bricked up. Other doors are quaintly made of adzed oak. We were told a corpse or skeleton was found all mouldering in dust, utterly forgotten, and with nothing to show who it had been or what was his sad history. The body was said to have been taken to the church for burial, but I could find no corroborative evidence. The place has been owned from time immemorial by the Mynors family, some of whom persisted in their old faith. We were shown a curious old painting on panel of a Jesuit, Father Harcourt, who is supposed to have a red line or black ribbon round his neck where his head was cut off, he being one of the victims of the Titus Oates perjuries. The picture and the legend are alike faded and dim now, but I find historical mention of two Father Harcourts, S.J.; one of them was executed, but the other, a Monmouthshire man—and Treago is on the border of Monmouthshire—escaped to Belgium. Titus Oates seems to have been a sort of City Auditor, always inventing plots and mischief. The marked neck reminded me of a tradition told to me years ago by an old woman, whose ancestors, named Birch, had long been known in Didsbury and the neighbourhood, that a relative of theirs, named Captain Seymour, had been beheaded in the north for participation in a Jacobite rising, and his body was brought in a cart and buried at Didsbury, at midnight, the severed head being fastened to the body by black ribbon.

We could have lingered long in this charming old house, noting the many curious bits of bygone days. There were some fine portraits by Sir Peter Lely and

much to see, but we had more to do, and we rode desperately for Ross. Somewhere in the fields on our left was a moated ruined hall, named Gillow, we had to leave for another year, and there was no time to tarry at the picturesque bridge and sundial at Wilton. We found Wythall again, and to lose no time X prepares to photograph, while I go to present my credentials. The front door has one of those ponderous old bell-handles like a mace. I pump away at it, but there is no sound of a bell. Then I seek another door and find some maidservants. Telling them who we are, I hurry back to X, for time and light are precious. Just as he is making an exposure (the only one of the whole year that was spoilt), there comes a sharp voice: "Aye, aye, aye, stop that, stop that, stop that; no photographing here till you have paid a shilling each." I give the old gent. half-a-crown, show him his own writing, and ask if we may photograph, for reproduction, and write about the place. He says, "Yes, now you have paid," and assures us that he gives the money to a hospital. Then when I asked for historical notes about the house, it transpired that he only rented it furnished, and therefore had been selling us something he had no right to sell, for if there were any rights or value in copyright, they vested in the owner of the property.

Near by the front of the house is a detached chapel, which is now used as a storehouse for apples. Perhaps they have heard of Eve being tempted by the devil with an apple, and as there are daughters of Eve in the neighbourhood, they may think it better to lock up the apples in the chapel where the devil cannot get them. The house is said to have been built in the fifteenth century. The windows at the back are curiously formed like the letter H, supposed to be in honour of King Henry. An enormous oaken column goes from cellar to roof, with oaken stairs all round it. Up and down the tortuous passages and quaint old-fashioned rooms is

WYTHALL (*see page* 337)

WYTHALL (*see page* 337)

much dark oaken panelling and furniture. A fine carved bedstead is dated 1621. There are good paintings, some of them apparently by Lely and some much older. There is old stained glass in the long staircase window, and a curious wicket at the end of the house made of open ironwork.

We have to photograph, as usual, in a desperate hurry. The General seems to scorn our feeble work,

FRONT DOOR, WYTHALL

saying that he uses a Kodak and has his films developed for him. He says he has taken a trout rising at a fly, which makes me eagerly wish to see it, but we are told there was more water than trout when all was finished. The tale sounds fishy. I wonder whether any fish will show in our picture of the moat, and whether we shall have to pay the old gent. extra for them if they are well developed. There are many big trout plainly to be seen, they are fairly tame, lazily swimming around, and pro-

bably of one or two pounds weight. A quince or medlar hangs over the water. The many-gabled black and white house with stained and lichened roof is faithfully reflected in the placid water and backed by hills rising steeply behind it, all in verdure clad and bathed in the mist of a rich autumnal eve. We could not imagine a

BACK OF WYTHALL

more beautiful picture than our eleventh exposure, and as there was another plate it was a happy thought to take the same again with another lens. Therefore we reproduce two photographs from the one standpoint: one by a Dallmeyer's rapid, rectilinear lens; the other by a Wray's five-inch Platystigmat lens.

Then we pack and rush like fury. It is seventeen miles to Hereford station, and not quite two hours to the time of the express. We have to go cautiously through

the dangerous, narrow, curved, steep streets of Ross, then comes a nice glide to Wilton Bridge, but after that four or five miles of almost constant uphill, a great deal of which we cannot ride. We comfort ourselves with the thought of the long descent of Aconbury, down which we flew before. Every mile I time and check, hopeful but not confident of the result, for at any time a puncture or slight accident would upset all our calculations; but all goes well. The last six miles take only half-an-hour, and the crowded streets of Hereford are safely traversed. Just in time to find the express twenty minutes late—a nice time for tea. Finally we arrive home all right, having been two hundred and twenty miles by rail, cycled nearly fifty miles, and taken twelve photographs—a very successful day's pilgrimage.

# MANCHESTER

IN these pilgrimages to old homes in many counties it would be a great omission if there were not some record of what is the oldest and by far the most historical home in the city of which X and I are citizens, where we have striven for many years in summer's stifling heat and winter's dismal fog to earn our daily bread, as our fathers did before us.

On the very citadel of Manchester there still stands a solid stone house centuries older than any other in the neighbourhood. I know not what to call it. It is generally called Chetham's College or Hospital, but, in the usual meaning of the words, it is neither college nor hospital, and it was there for ages before Chethams were heard of. The original and local pronunciation of this name is as if it were spelt Cheetham, it being near Cheetham, now a crowded Jewry in the city, and the family name is not uncommon still. The older title of the house would be The Baron's Hall. Millions go past it unconscious of its existence. In the hurried race for wealth they have no time to spare to think of those whose toil has ended, no time for quietude in that dim and ghostly library, or in peace and calm amid the city's din to enjoy the works of those who have passed as shadows, age after age, as utterly forgotten as we all soon shall be.

If I as a stranger and pilgrim came to Manchester and strolled around her streets to read some little of her history, its ancient church above its filthy river would soon show whence it started. Then if some friend took me a few yards higher, and showed me another river,

filthier and fouler now than any Styx, flowing round a rocky corner into the former river, with steep banks of blocks of sandstone, there, I should say, was the original fortress of Manchester.

Primitive man always seized on any natural stronghold that there might be on which to dwell in safety. Here he would instinctively seize this rocky corner and dig a deep ditch from river to river to isolate his home. By the wall of Chetham's Library, which now stands on this site, a trench was lately dug. Seven feet below the ground a boulder-made Roman road was found, and four to five feet lower down was the moat or fosse of the Ancient Britons, silted up with sand containing seeds of elder, juniper, or bramble, all buried for two thousand years.

Here is testimony to the dual origin of the name of Manchester, for whatever changes there may have been it looks most probable that the first syllable is the Celtic maen or rock, the natural fortress forty feet above the rapid rivers which the Romans seized, and near to which they pitched their camp and left its name.

With apologies for this digression I would like to say that my previous books were partly written and published at my office in Hanging Ditch, Manchester, but within the past year both sides of Hanging Ditch have been utterly swept away. When the north side was being rebuilt for the new Corn Exchange, I could see from my window nearly all the line of semicircular moat that encompassed the first town of Manchester. I mean the much larger moat of the Normans, not the small dyke of the Britons. This moat would leave the river Irk (it should be Ink, it now runs under the railway), about Toad Lane or Todd Street, continuing at a great depth under Hanging Ditch, where I have seen it, under Hanging Bridge, a fourteenth century bridge lately uncovered, into the river Irwell. The enclosed site held The Baron's Hall, the town mill, hovels of serfs, and "th' owd" church. The alehouses that swarm

THE CLOISTERS

around a church, the corn and other markets, and the Grammar School, would come in time. The streets that cross it, Millgate and Fennel (Funnel) Street, with Hyde's Cross and Withy Grove on the margin of The Ditch, show in their names their origin.

Many centuries innocent of history pass over this old fortress, and what was done therein no man knoweth. Centuries are merely drops in the ocean of time. Meanwhile the Kingdom of England grew together, Edward succeeding Alfred, and the Anglo-Saxon chronicle tells us that in late harvest King Edward went to Thelwall, and from there ordered a force of Mercians "to repair and man Mame-ceaster." That is the first mention of the name in English, A.D. 923.

The Domesday survey shows us that nearly all the Hundred of Salford was waste, worth £7 a year. There were two churches that held land in Mamecestre. They are believed to be the originals of our "owd church" or cathedral, and St. Michael's at Ashton. There were only about ninety families in the Hundred, reckoning all the knights and serfs and villeins, with one priest. The Norman Barons who grabbed the land were named Grelle, a name that was spelt with endless variations. The second one gave the mill to the Abbey of Swineshead (we often had corn ground at its successor, "The School" Mill). The fifth Baron, Robert Greslet, is believed to have lived at the Baron's Yard or Hall, the place of which I write. He obtained charters for Mamecestr by giving to the King a palfrey. A few years before he had helped to wring the Magna Charta from King John at Runnymede.

The last of the Grelles being a bachelor—like his successors, the priest-lord who founded the college, the better known Humfrey Chetham, Bishop Oldham, of the Grammar School and Mayes, the founder of another prosperous charity—did some good in his generation without increasing the population. All the great bene-

PASSAGE BY THE HALL

factors of Manchester have been bachelors, unappreciated blessings to the community. In 1301 Grelle granted the charter to Mamecestrie under which the town was governed for more than five hundred years. This document is now in good preservation in our Town Hall, with the secret seal of Robert Grelle attached. The name of the town is not spelt quite the same even in this charter. The endorsement in 1623 has Mancestri, the present seal of the Corporation Maincestriae. Thomas Grelle went to live with his sister Joan and her husband, Sir John la Warre, and gave to them the Manor of Mamecestre, subject to his life interest, and a grant of three tofts of land to his beloved servant, Richard de Boudoun (Bowdon?), with pasturage for "twenty cows with a certain bull, and the issue of them all; twelve suckling sows and one boar, with all his issue for three years, and six sows" on Mamecestre Hethe (probably Newton Heath).

John la Warre gave Manchester to Abbey Dore, but it came free again. For our pilgrimage to Abbey Dore, down the golden valley in Herefordshire, see page 133. What whirligigs of fortune come with time! It seems incredible that those lonely deserted ruins or their owners could once have owned what has grown into our great city.

The last Lord, Thomas la Warre, was also the rector, and he obtained a licence to have the church collegiate, that is, with a warden, fellows, priests, and choristers, to officiate in the church and reside at the college. The old Baronial Hall was "converted" or altered for this college about the year 1423, and now we come to history that we can see and touch.

It is very likely that the present enormous lofty kitchen near to the main door was originally the great hall of the Lord. A few yards from it is the present hall. This was probably built nearly five hundred years ago, and is larger and loftier than its still older predecessor. Massive oaken screens partially protect it from the

THE DINING-HALL

draughts of the passage to the pantries and butteries. The ingle-nook, or fireplace, is of later date than the hall itself, for if the hall were warmed or attempted to be warmed in the good old days there would only be a fire at Christmas, or on special occasions, which fire would be in a brazier in the middle of the room, with the smoke distributed by the draughts. The high table and canopied dais are at the southern end, with dole window toward the court, and private stairs of winding stone to the withdrawing rooms for "the quality." This smaller hall, now called the feoffee's room, is very interesting with its richly ornamented carvings, frieze, and furniture. It was too confined, too full of furniture, and too dark to get a satisfactory photograph, therefore we do not illustrate it, and instead of attempting to describe one hundredth part of this most interesting old home, half secular, half religious, converted and reconverted, feudal hall, cloistered cell, poor boys' school, library for the learned, I must advise the reader to see it for himself, for it is easy of access, and the intelligent will be well repaid.

Perhaps it would be as well to shortly tell the history for a few more centuries. At the spoliation of the religious houses this one was "conveyed, the wise it call," to the Stanleys, Earls of Derby, to whom so many more of the broad acres of Lancashire were conveyed. The original deed of conveyance from Edward the Sixth to Edward, Earl of Derby, dated 9th of July 1549, is now framed on the mantelpiece of the room that was once the Countess of Derby's, where it is the privilege of the Council of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society to have their monthly meetings. The church lands were restored to the church again, but not the college, which fell on evil days when the Earl was executed on the scaffold. Fortunately, better times were dawning, and in 1656 the dilapidated buildings were rescued by the trustees of Humfrey Chetham's will for a public library and an hospital or home for forty healthy boys, born in wed-

THE READING-ROOM OF THE LIBRARY

lock of honest and industrious parents. The widowed Countess of Derby, who signed the sale of the college to the trustees, was the woman famous for her undaunted courage and high spirit during the long siege of Lathom House. Round the cornice of the reading-room are alternately the eagle's foot of the Stanleys, and the portcullis, the badge of their relatives, the Beauforts. This curious room, with its curious furniture, would beggar my description. The photograph shows the Jacobean work of the north side. Aloft on the left is the cock which the lads say crows (as they would like to do), when it smells roast beef. Reflected light spoils the reproduction of the ancient portraits in oil. There is Bradford, the martyr; Nowell, Dean of St. Paul's, the inventor of bottled beer and the first catechism; and other famous worthies. The portrait in the middle is of Humfredus Chetham, Fundator.

From the forthcoming life by our city librarian I find that when Humfrey Chetham was High Sheriff of Lancaster, he assumed a coat of arms to which he had no right, and got into trouble thereby. In those days it was a great offence to "take arms," nowadays no one bothers about it. An alderman and magistrate of Manchester lately showed me his signet-ring and motto, telling me some stationers had "give it" him. Humfrey got out of his troubles and penalties by cash and diplomacy. His friends and retainers were very cute, and managed well. They distributed "pieces" in odd amounts, and wrote "Wee could not have been more sparinge without ecclipsinge your glory . . . better suffer in your purse rather then in your reputation and creditt." Sir Henry St. George Norroy, King of Arms, made some alterations in the coat he had assumed (it was too like that of the Traffords); told him to spell his name "with two H and one E," Chetham; to take what motto he pleased; and pay. So all ended amicably, Cheetham became Chetham, though his senior kinsman at the time spelt it Cheetam.

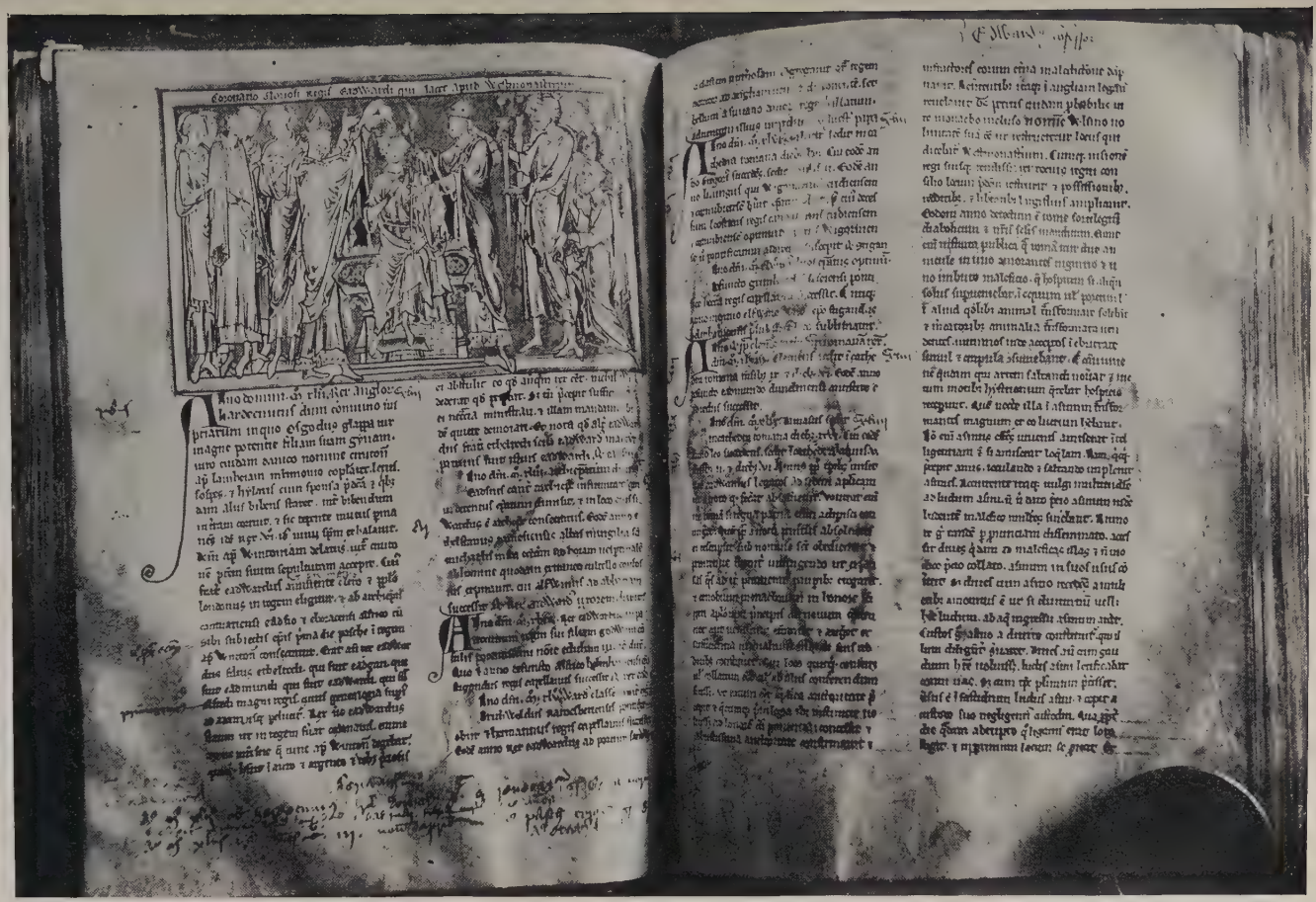
THE GATEHOUSE

The pronunciation remained the same, for even the august Norroy, King of Arms, has no power there. The "pretty" motto chosen was "Quod tuum tene" (Hold your own), a variation on the Trafford's "Gripe Griffin Holdfast." To hold does sound more gentlemanly than to gripe or grip, and may be quite as efficacious. These mottoes are often brutally cynical. If any one calmly judges that close, hard face of Humfrey Chetham, with the keen eyes, determined mouth, and strong nose, it certainly looks as if he would act up to his motto while life lasted.

Humfrey Chetham was a tradesman of Manchester, who made money, and lent it largely at 8 per cent. to county families during the troubles of the Civil War. He left his money to be expended in land, the college if it could be got, and for the purposes stated above. As in all other charities where the lands are kept, the value of them must increase with the increase and prosperity of the people. If the funds had been kept in cash or lent on loan they would probably have been lost or of little value. The good business man, Humfrey Chetham, well knew that, and planned accordingly.

The new charity was dedicated on the 5th of August, 1656. That is the anniversary of the martyrdom of St. Oswald, the charter of collegiation, and the once great festival of the rush-cart and wakes at Didsbury. The first minute-book records very concisely the history of the house. "This house had formerly been the haule or manor house of the Grelles or Gresleys, Lords of Manchester, and was then called Baron's Court or Baron's Yerde, and afterwards it was built colledge wise . . . and called the Colledge; and about one hundred years agoe was alienated to the Earl of Derbie. . . . From henceforth the sayd house could fitly and justly be called by noe other name than Mr. Chetham's Hospitall."

Chetham's Hospital is now the home of one hundred boys with their caretakers, and sixty thousand volumes of books. Another popular name for the place locally was the Blue Coat School. The lads were dressed in



*See next page*

long blue coats, long blue stockings and cap, with yellow petticoat, which now has been abandoned. One or two are shown in our photograph of the gatehouse. It is easy to see this gatehouse is of many ages, some of it may be as old as any part of the buildings. To the left of it was the ancient hospitium, now the lad's dormitories. Through the archway may be seen one of the very few black and white houses that are left in Manchester. This one has projecting storeys, and has long looked like tumbling into the narrow Millgate.

In the library the book lover will find "many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore." Wyclif's Bible, Hollinworth's Mancuniensis, first edition of Homer, and the gem of the lot, the manuscript chronicle of the greatest of the monastic historians, Matthew Paris of St. Albans. This we were told is worth anything from £5000 upwards, so we photographed it also, at the picture of the Coronation of Edward the Confessor. In cramped old English black letter is the picture headed "Coronatio gloriosi Regis Eadwardi qui jacet apud Westmonasterium." It may be of interest to point out that each year's history begins with a very large A for Anno Domini, and the date. As these letters A are alternately red or blue, the red ones show in the photograph, but not the blue ones. Now, if the reader looks at the illustration at the top of the first column, it says—"Anno domini Mxlii" or 1042: in the next column are the next three years. On the other page, the first A D is plainly mxlvi or 1046, and the initial letters in all the odd years are blue and indistinct.

Matthew Paris wrote: "If historians tell the truth they provoke men, if they write what is false they offend God." That soon came home to me in my jottings of local history.

If some poor moythered pilgrim, a wanderer in the streets of Manchester, seeks repose amid the din, here is an oasis from the deafening clang. The infernal shrieks from the adjacent railway sound but faintly here.

The smells from Stygian rivers are softened through these walls of stone. The scriptorium of a Cistercian Abbey would not be quieter than this. There may come gently stealing along those ghostly passages the strains of song, the evening hymn sung by one hundred youthful voices—

> Glory to Thee, my God, this night,
> For all the blessings of the light.

Then if the stranger will look down from the minstrel's gallery on that high hall, where lads standing erect in old-world dress of bands and buckles fold their hands in prayer, while the light sends chequered radiance on walls and timbers hallowed with five hundred years of history, a strangely sad yet soothing feeling will come over him. A happy memory, when out he goes into the roar and clang of Manchester, where the smoke goes up unceasingly through the dark day and the long night, where the sound of the piston stroke never ceases, and the work is never done.

THE BRERETON ARMS, BRERETON

THE BRERETON ARMS, BRERETON

# SHIPTON HALL

HAVING heard of Shipton Hall as a house from which was lately sold a famous collection of ancestral furniture, armour, books, manuscripts, silver, pewter, and other heirlooms, we went on pilgrimage one fine hot day, cycling from Shrewsbury, to find it. It is in Corvedale, on the road from Much Wenlock to Craven Arms and Ludlow. We went by Pitchford, Acton Burnell, and Easthope, for we had come that way from Easthope two years before, when we had found and photographed the ruined parliament house and castle at Acton Burnell. On that day we had travelled about twenty miles, unable to get our afternoon tea, and this day we seemed likely to fare as badly. By Kenley, Hughley, Easthope, and Brockton, we went over two edges that were edges indeed, and sharp edge up. It was impossible to ride up, and dangerous to ride down. Along the top of Wenlock Edge there is one of the most beautiful roads in the kingdom for scenery for many miles. Right and left are grand views over a country wild and fertile—primitive enough, yet teeming with tradition, history, and ancient halls. This journey we merely climbed up one side and down the other, hot and thirsty, longing to rest and enjoy ourselves, but not knowing where we should be before the long summer's day was done. At Brockton we found an inn, The Feathers, and plunged in. "Missus, how soon could you get us some tea?" "Yo' mun wait. Dunner yo' see I'm gettin' th' men their baggin'," was the tart reply. The pay of these men would be about three halfpence

SHIPTON HALL

to twopence an hour, and a clodhopper was waiting with a mouth that could swallow potatoes whole. He reminded me of a long cadaverous yokel who would drink buttermilk and then swallow new potatoes, letting us hear them go splash into the buttermilk. That being one of the attractions of the once famous Wakes of Didsbury. At the sound of that woman's voice X bolted, going the wrong road in his hurry, while I had to whistle for him and wait.

We struggled on along the lonely road, for the afternoon was wearing, and the day was hot. Nearing Shipton, we met an old man and his daughter, with whom I stopped to have some talk.

"Is this Shipton Hall we are coming to, please?"

"Yes."

"Is it inhabited now?"

"Yes."

"We have come a long way to see and photograph it."

"Oh!"

"Do you think we can get permission?"

"Um."

"Who has it now?"

"Me."

"Oh! that's lucky. Well, I hope you will let us photograph."

"What's your name?"

I told him, and for confirmation showed it painted on the Beeston Humber.

"What's his name?"

I told him that also, and called to X, who had gone on, but who now returned to find an old customer, which is more profitable than a dead ancestor. As time was precious, I asked for the nearest inn, that tea might be ordered while X was photographing, and our retreat made good to a railway, but our new friend shortly said, "We'll find tea."

SHIPTON HALL

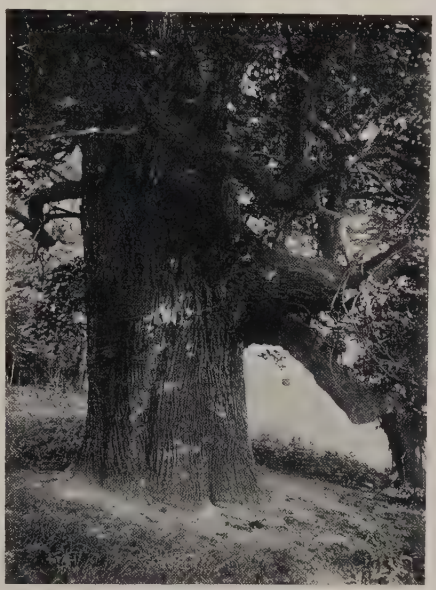
We were welcomed to a most charming old home. The hall stands back from the road, beyond several forecourts or small gardens, each one raised above the other up wide stone steps and balustrades; terraces filled with

DOVECOT, SHIPTON HALL

fine old-fashioned flowers, mostly roses and lilies, with grey lichened stone walls and vases in between. The house is picturesquely built, with tower and broad projecting windows. Fir trees straggle up the hill behind, where the garden leads to a little time-worn church.

To the right are stables and coachhouses of stone

that were well built nearly two hundred years ago, and the bills for the building our host said he had lately found, but the charges were so ridiculously low he could hardly believe them. On a bank behind is a large circular dovecot, also of stone, with no window or access for cat or rat. On the top is a lantern or opening for the pigeons, which is now inhabited by owls, and the roof is a mass of luxuriant polypody fern. Inside are hundreds of nesting holes, with an immense revolving ladder which fits the interior. Broody hens are now the only inmates.



SPANISH CHESTNUT

There is an avenue of walnut trees and an enormous specimen of the edible chestnut tree, whose twisted trunk we tried to photograph with the house beyond, but one being in dense shade, and the other in light, the picture is not a success.

Inside the house is as beautiful as it is out. There is a spacious hall, oaken staircase, later library with some of the old books, carved mantels, good wainscotting, big rack that once held the great store of crested pewter, and the tower. Up aloft we go to try and find the ghost. Among the great roof timbers we climb on hands and knees unto the leads, and what a grand view is there! The old man follows to take care of us, and tells of a large secret chamber, to which there is no access but through a hole in the ceiling of the kitchen. This is

not a little hiding-hole, but a big one, big enough for a ballroom or a great muster.

It is thought this house was built by the Myttons about three hundred years ago. It was noted as a treasury for all old-fashioned homely things, but most unfortunately everything was sold by auction not many years since. Then the place was empty, and our host, who had left the village some seventy years before as a poor lad to make his own way in the world, returned again and bought it. We hope he may live long to enjoy it.

We paid a hurried visit to the little church, which is said to have many peculiarities. There was a quarrel about it as far back as A.D. 1110. To me its chief peculiarity seemed that the grass is so even and smooth, being evidently very seldom disturbed, as if folk hereabout seldom died. Records tell that land was cultivated in champerty nearly six hundred years since. Hugh Lovekyn, of Schipton, finds half the seeds, pays two shillings rent, and does customs and service to the lord. William le Kyng does the plowing, gives Hugh the tenth garb (wheatsheaf), and has half the meadow land. It looks as if the latter had the best bargain, for the service to the lord is an unknown quantity.

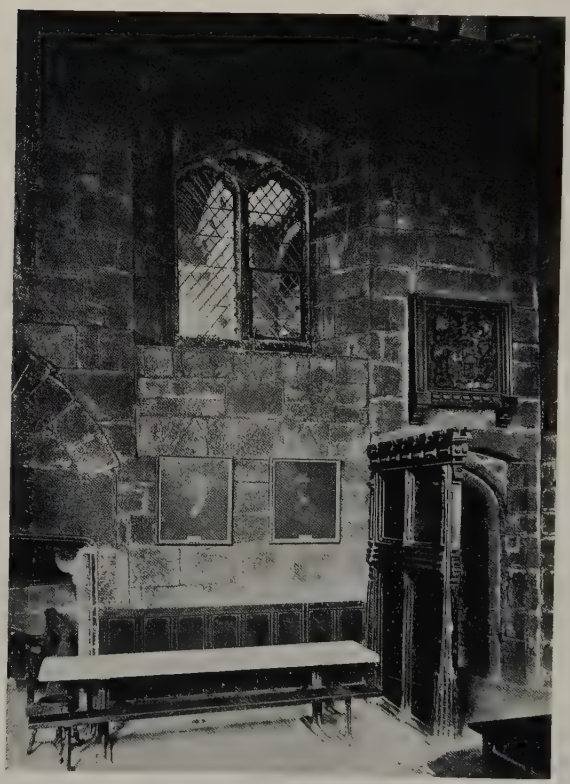
Here is another interesting glimpse into the lives and manners of our forefathers. In Morf Forest, which was not far from Shipton Hall, there was a wrestling match, A.D. 1292, and men from Brug (Bridgnorth) came armed with bows and arrows. One of them, named Robert de Turbervill, also brought a greyhound, which was against the stringent forest laws. A quarrel arose, and the foresters were beaten. They complained to their Seneschal, Corbet of Caus. Corbet already had a grudge against the men of Brug, who, he said, had promised him a cask of wine, and he imprisoned or indicted forty-four burgesses as malefactors of the forest. But the jury found that he was "a malevolent and a procurer of evil,"

so he would not get his cask of wine, and perhaps the dog went again to the forest when he was in bed, or ought to have been in bed, if ever he went there.

There is a railway station about two miles from Shipton Hall, but the way thither was through thickets and tangles of briers, up and down hills in Mogg Forest, where we should probably get lost, therefore we were advised to take the good road to Craven Arms, which was ten or twelve miles away, but all straight going. We had a good hour to do it in to catch the express. Refreshed and exhilarated we did it, hands down, including two stoppages, for storms came on. At first we sheltered a little under a thick holly hedge, and then rushed for "The Court House" at Munslow, where I had rested the day of finding the forester's lodge, Upper Millichope, which some claim to be one of the very oldest houses in England.

Though our little pilgrimages are so much more commonplace and painfully modern than those of the romantic days and tales of Chaucer, yet even in railway carriages we meet strange folk at times—politicians and men of the world as conservative in their denseness as if the art of reading and writing were still one of the doubtful black arts of magic. Here is an instance. Into a second-class non-smoking compartment enter two horse dealers just as the train is leaving Crewe. One of them, in the intervals of striking matches to light a cigar, continually shouts loudly to the company: "What's all this 'ere rot about eddycation? Look at me. I wur ne'er eddycated, but I con buy the beggars up. Look at me. I tells yer I wur ne'er eddycated, but I lends money to them as 'as 'ad a grammy schule eddycation. Yes, yo' may look at me. I left schule, I did, when I wur eleven. Think o' that; an' I con buy t'other beggars up. I con so. What's the good o' sanguinary eddycation to them as 'as got nowt? Why, I've just wrote a cheque for fifty quid for one 'oss. No; I got a sovereign agen. I tells

truth, I do. I'll show you my bank-book. We should mak' some money o' that 'oss, Joe." Here Joe interposed, "Aye, if it dunner dee." This momentarily took the breath of our naturally educated companion. "Dee! aye, that wu'd be a job." A pause. "But what's that got to do wi' eddycation? I tells yo' I con buy t'other beggars up wi' aw their eddycation—grammy schule or any other schule. Blow 'em."



A BIT OF OLD MANCHESTER

# NORBURY IN DERBYSHIRE

AFTER our former journey into Derbyshire (page 44) we hoped to miss that county in the future, preferring the better country to the south on the beautiful borderland of Wales, but being one of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society I went with them to Norbury, which is on the Staffordshire border, found it well worth seeing, and reported to X, who was pleased to find more ancestors to photograph.

We went by train to Tissington, and then cycled up and down greasy hills towards Fenny Bentley, where there is an old house with the remains of a square tower, a keep or peel, which has evidently seen better days. It was for long years the home of a branch of the Beresford family of Beresford, or Beversford, a ruined hall a few miles off over the bleak hills. The name commemorates the industrious little beaver who once dwelt in the valley and the brook. The descendants of the family are aristocratic and numerous, for the head of the Fenny Bentley branch in the fifteenth century had sixteen sons and five daughters by one wife. He is said to have saddled sixteen horses for the war with sixteen sons to ride them. We may think that some of them might have found something better to do, and not left the plowing to be done by women and oxen while they all went gallivanting.

It was with difficulty that we kept our machines and ourselves upright on the slippery limestone roads. X's tyre soon exploded with a loud bang, and we walked or went slowly for three miles to Ashbourne to get it mended. The shops were being closed when we got

there, for it was their weekly half-holiday, and many British workmen object to working overtime. Eventually X bought a new tyre, and had that put on at a cost of £2. Much time having been wasted we did not even enter the fine church of Ashbourne, but pressed on for Norbury. Before we had gone two miles the new tyre collapsed, utterly refusing to be blown up, and as it would be useless returning, we plodded carefully on.

FENNY BENTLEY

Derbyshire roads are greasy, narrow, rutty, twisty, steep, slippery, and strewn with sharp stones. Suddenly one of my pedals came off as I was carefully going downhill with one brake on. It hid itself very cleverly in the nettles by the side of the lane, and more time was wasted, though fortunately no one was hurt. We tried to be patient, thought of Job, and our own broken resolutions never again to cycle in the county whose name begins with a great big D.

Troubles vanish—for a time—when we find a beautiful church that is open and free, exceptionally fine in works of

NORBURY CHURCH

art, and of long continued authentic history. The actual charter whereby the Prior of Tutbury gave Norbury to the Fitzherberts for a yearly rent of a hundred shillings and five shillings to the prior, is still in existence, and in the possession of the Fitzherberts of Swynnerton. Its date is A.D. 1125, an exceptionally old deed. The family kept the advowson of the church until the Reformation, when and for years after they were greatly harassed and spoiled for refusing to conform to the change of religion; and they clung to the lands until quite recently, an ownership of more than 700 years.

Two crosses with coil or rope-like carving were lately dug up near the church, and are now in the scullery of the old hall. The stained glass is considered to be some of the finest in the kingdom. The decorated chancel, with curious twelve-petalled flowers in the stone tracery of its eight beautiful windows and finely-tinted glass, was made about 1350. The body of the church was built from 1470 to 1500, and the glass from it has been lately put in the east window to replace the splendid work stolen from there. Some of the oak in the chancel has been recently skinned. It is finely grained, and a few more centuries may mellow it again.

The monuments of the Fitzherberts are grand, and really worth noticing, not only as works of art, but as mementoes of the ideals, the best clothes, and even the families of the by-gone lords, who were little Sultans in their domains only subject to the call of their overlord to war, or sometimes vexed by priestly pride. A cross-legged effigy in stone of the fifth or sixth lord in chain armour is the oldest. Its date is about 1300, and the figure is more worn than the oaken effigy at Pitchford, which is about the same age. The simplest is the form of a corpse in a shroud on a gravestone. It commemorates an

> "Elysebeth . . .
> The which decessed the year that is goone,
> A thousand four hundred neynty and oone."

THE TOMB OF SIR NICHOLAS FITZHERBERT, TENTH LORD OF NORBURY

The two gorgeous altar tombs are of the tenth and eleventh lords, in all the grandeur of plate armour, collars, decorations, spurs, and swords. One has an angel, the other a monk, to hold his foot from tripping as he crosses the unknown bourne. Their families below them are fine. One has seventeen children, the other fifteen. Plenty of ancestors here for all sorts of folk. The photograph of the north side of the tomb of Sir Nicholas Fitzherbert, tenth lord of Norbury, shows some of his children. The first figure is a man in armour with cross; probably his son, Sir Ralph, who is on the other tomb. The next little figure is a lawyer with a scroll. The next is a monk with a book. The sons were evidently distributed among the professions. Some one has knocked off the head of the next one. Then come civilians, or merchants, or nondescripts, we cannot decipher. Very curious and beautiful art, but probably the originals are all dust now, and though we feel that we are only temporary coagulations of the dust, an inner craving tells us not to tarry here.

In the ivy on the wall outside the porch is a robin's nest quite filled up and crowded out with a fat young cuckoo, which the rector's daughter is very proud of, and it speaks well for her influence with the neighbouring lads that they have never stoned or molested the curious mottled nestling, which seems to change into a brilliant orange-coloured cavern when it opens its wide bill and throat for food. In a few weeks it will sail alone for Africa. What will guide it? Its foster parents will not go. Its real parents have gone. The wisest lore of the most scientific men knows not the knowledge of the cuckoo.

Norbury old hall adjoins the church. It is evidently of many ages. The oldest part appears to be used as outhouses. None of it is inhabited, though the later part is kept in order, and contains some very good panelling and old engravings of Hogarth and others on

the walls. The church, the churchyard, with flowers and yews, and the ancient home, are all well maintained. The road to the station below is short but steep. I remembered that a train had left on the previous Saturday at a certain time, so we caught it again, booking to Stockport. As the train was moving a porter said we were going the wrong way. I thought I knew better, and off we went. At Ashbourne they cried out, "All change here," and said the train went no farther. When I told them that only on the previous Saturday we had gone by that same train to Stockport, their answer was, "Oh, that was Saturday, this is Thursday; trains go different ways round on different days; you'll have to go back and go by Rocester and Leek." So we dawdled round for three hours: got to Stockport, wearied and jaded, taking the bikes home on a cab. Another Derbyshire Day!

NORBURY HALL

# CARDEN

IN the south of Cheshire, on the lower range of the Broxton hills, midway between the picturesque little towns of Holt and Farndon on the river Dee, and the high village of Harthill on the hill of Bickerton, there stands in charming scenery another of the black-and-white houses for which that country is famous.

On one of our first pilgrimages we had seen Carden from the road, and had rested and photographed in the very quaint, old-fashioned inn known as The Cock at Barnton, which is near to it. Now we asked for leave to visit the Park, and certainly the approach up a long avenue of well-grown trees, with glistening mere on one side and craggy hills on the other, is very fine. It is a case of disenchantment as we draw nearer to the large house at the end of the grand trees to find it is rather a painted sham; but the other side is genuinely timber-built, level with a garden and wide lawn, where again the trees show health and vigour, as if the soil and climate both were good.

The first syllable of the name shows its Celtic origin. It has been spelt in many ways. One family has held the place or part of it for nearly five hundred years. For the last of the Cardens left his estates to his four daughters, and Elenor married a Leche, who was probably a son of the Leech or Surgeon to King Edward the Third, who granted him £10 a year out of the mills on the Dee.

John le Leche succeeded John, until the pedigrees

CARDEN

say there were fourteen Johns and only one William, whose elder brother John had died without succeeding. There seems little to note in the history of the house or family, but from Malbon's diary of the Civil War I make the following interesting extract :—

"On Saturdaye, the x. of June, 1643, some Companyes marched furthe to Carden and sett upon Mr. Leeche's howse (a Com'issioner of Arraye), whoe did oppose theim. But in the end they gott the howse; apprehended him; broughte him with theim prsonr; plu'dred his howse; kild a servant maid with shootinge att the howse, and broughte with him some others and some horses alsoe to Namptwiche."

Some time before there had been a bear bait at Carden, when one "Phillip Cappur, of Clutton, dyd suddenly at that disordered Sport."

Malbon's diary is one of those invaluable histories that shortfully and truthfully give us, in old-fashioned language and spelling, a good insight into what was really done, and what folk and their homes of the time were like. The better known diary of Burghall is merely an altered plagiarism of it. Malbon was a lawyer of Nantwich, and steward to the Crewe estates. He would probably be descended from Malbedeng, Baron of Wich Malbank, as Nantwich was formerly named. One of the last of the family, who was a connection of my own, changed his name to Melbourne, but the country folk still pronounced it Morbon. Malbon's own spelling is interesting to me, for it shows the local pronunciation of names was the same then as it is now. For instance, Shrewsbury is always Shrowesbury, Cholmondeley is Cholmley, Ruthin is Wrythen, Levison is Lewson.

"Upon Saturdaye mornynge, the xxii. of ffebruary, 1644(5), Colonell Mytton and Colonell Boyer on the p'liamt side with aboute fyfteene hundred horse and foote did very secretlie and cuninglie enter into Shrowesbury,

CARDEN

althoughe not att the Gates nor by any knowledge of theim in the Towne; But weire bold to hold ytt. . . . Upon takinge of Shrowesbury the Kinge's ptie burned and quytt Lea Hall and Tonge Castle. Morton Corbett deserted alsoe and burned by the p'liamt ptie."

In the coming summer (1645) many of the halls or castles mentioned in these pilgrimages went up in flames. The strife between Cavalier and Roundhead, Royalist or Puritan, waxed bitterer and savager. Any foreigner or Irish caught by the Namptwiche Puritans was hanged at once. The massacre in Barthomley Church on the Christmas Eve of 1643, when the schoolmaster and twelve villagers (whose names I have given in "Folk Lore and Tales") were butchered by the Royalist Connaught, was never forgotten; nor the treachery and long siege of Beeston.

"Command was gyven and warrants sente to the places neerest adioyning ffor the pullinge downe and utter defacinge of Beeston Castle, wch before Whitsunweeke, 1646, was p'formed. Onelie the Gatehowse in the lower warde and pte of some Towers in the heigher warde weir lefte standinge, wch scythens are pulled downe and utterlie defaced."

Carden, being easily taken, escaped destruction; but the savage ruin that fell on all the homes in this fair country during that cruel war, when families fell out among themselves, should make us trebly thankful for the great blessings of peace.

The country from Carden homewards is some of the best in Cheshire. There is a long climb up Bickerton Hill, and then a beautiful road with woods and rounded knolls or little hills ablaze with gorse on one side and the rich dairyland on the other. For a mile or two we go under the great trees alongside the domain of Peckforton, passing its grand castellated gateway, where a giant oak stretches far and wide. The castle perched

aloft is seen above the trees on our left, and just beyond it is the grand old ruin of Beeston. Circling through the little village, we come to the railway station, where there is a choice of routes for home. If the cyclist has time and strength for the farther journey, he may go through Tarporley, or leave it on the left, going by Eaton and nearer to Oulton, but by either road crossing Delamere Forest, where the going, air, and scenery are excellent until he nears Northwich, when the smoke and the stinks of the chemicals and saltworks will soon make him wish he was home.

COCK INN, BARNTON

# BARLOW HALL

IT does not seem right to pass over any old homes in my own neighbourhood if historically interesting, simply because we have not to make a journey or go on pilgrimage to find them. This old parsonage is the oldest home near to the ancient church of Didsbury. It is probably the house referred to in an agreement that was drawn up by the parishioners of Didesbury at the time of the Civil War. "Item. That the mesuage and tenemt assigned to the use of the minister of the said church for the tyme beinge, shall bee valued and acompted at the rate of tenne pounds p annu (towards the said xl £ p. a.), considringe the tymes, and that Mr. Clayton is a single man, and soe cannot husband it to advantage." Here was the parson "passing rich on forty pounds a year," for they stopped ten of it for the house, as the poor man was a bachelor; what they would stop if he got wed is not stated.

As I have elsewhere referred to the legends, folk-lore, and ghosts of the place, we can now go a little farther afield to the time-honoured but little known hall of Barlow. Even with my life-long knowledge of Didsbury, its history, and its public life and records, it is somewhat of a puzzle to say which is or which has been Didsbury and which is or was Barlow.

Strictly speaking, Barlow seems never to have been anything but a hall and a moor. It was neither parish nor township, and yet there are several records where

NEWER END OF BARLOW HALL

mention is made of the lordship and manor of Barlow. The hall was the home of one eminent family for four hundred years. An intensely conservative family; more than one of whose members sacrificed everything, even to life itself, for their faith. The moor that extended for two miles from near the hall to Didsbury seems to have been named Diddesbury Moor a long time ago, but in later years Barlow Moor. Where the moor lane joined the main road at Didsbury there grew up a colony of shops and small houses which we called Barlow Moor. But a railway was made there, and the station labelled Didsbury. Then houses sprang up from the ground as the mushrooms suddenly come with the warm dews of autumn. Miles of streets soon covered the site of the moor; the "bare low" of Barlow. There are now about 10,000 people, where fifty years ago were 1449. At the beginning of the last century there were 619, and now we have more than that number in the workhouse, so greatly have we advanced. The names of the districts or places have been changed. The residuary parish of Didsbury is small and select, the church has been "thoroughly restored" several times in my life, and the Barlow Chapel has as utterly vanished as though it ne'er had been, so complete has been the restoration.

It is a wonder that Barlow Hall has not vanished also, but it is in a secluded, lonesome part of the old moor, and near to the river Mersey. It is now two or three hundred yards outside the boundary of Didsbury township, being included in Chorlton-cum-Hardy. Just three hundred years ago there were lawsuits about the manorial rights and encroachments on the waste grounds of the moors of Didisburye and Chollerton or Chowreton, the Barlows of Barlow Hall being complained of.

The oldest deed of which I can find any record about

COURTYARD OF BARLOW HALL

Didsbury or Barlow rather curiously refers to both places. As there is no date to it, it was probably made before A.D. 1300. Alexander and Roger were always common names in the Barlow family, and some members were generally priests. This one was evidently wealthy, and, being in the church, settled his property on family relatives. From abstracts of family deeds in the Harleian MSS. it appears: Alexander, the chaplain ("cap'lnus") of Didsbury, settles all his lands in Barlow, Chollerton, Harday, and the water mill, on Roger de Barlow, his son Thomas, and all lawful heirs.

In 1397 a certificate from Lichfield, beginning "In Dei noie, Amen" (In the name of God, Amen), says that Thomas de Barlow is the sole lord of Barlow, there having apparently been the usual litigation. Skipping over a few more years let us notice that twice on the present house is the date, 1574. On the dial on the wall (see page 381), is written "Lumen me regit 1574 vos umbra" (The light rules me, the shade rules you). There may be some reference here to the frequent changes of faith which were then common.

In what is sometimes called the chapel window, a fine old window which faces the east, there is the same date, the initials A. B., several shields of arms, the Earl of Derby's being one, and the mottoes "Prist en Foyt" and "Respice finem." These mottoes appear to have been used as guides, constancy in faith to the end.

Shortly after the rebuilding of the house, namely in 1584, it was searched for priests. It may have been thought there were too many hiding-holes or secret chambers wanted in it, and that it had been altered for that purpose. No priests were found, but the master was dragged to prison in Manchester, where he soon afterwards died, and was buried at Didsbury. The

registers record "Alexander Barlowe de Barlowe, esquyer." His son, Sir Alexander, in his will said, "Yf yt fortune I die within twentye myles of my house of Barlowe, that my sayd bodye be leyde in Didsburye Churche, as neere unto my father as may be," but they

BARLOW HALL

buried him by torchlight at Manchester. This Sir Alexander was married at four years old, renounced that wife, and married the daughter of Sir Uryan Brereton, of Honford, by whom he had fourteen children. His picture has been often engraved. One of his sons was Rudesind, the President of the English Benedictines, and a more famous one was Edward the Martyr.

The Didsbury Church register still plainly shows the entry of baptism: "November 30, 1585, Edwarde, the sonne of Alex. Barlowe, gent." The name he assumed when admitted a Benedictine was Ambrose. A full account of his life and cruel execution may be found in Challoner's "Missionary Priests." He seems to have been a devout ascetic, living on "whitmeats and garden stuff," of mean apparel, averse to play or feasting, would not look at a woman, always minding his work, and finally was taken by a minister, who some accounts say was the Vicar of Eccles, in his surplice, accompanied by men with clubs and swords, on Easter Day, 1641. He was taken to the gaol at Lancaster, where he confessed he was a priest, and sentence of death was soon passed When dragged on a hurdle to execution some "ministers of religion" persisted in trying to "convert" him. Perhaps they thought they were kind and good. An old Lancashire proverb says, "There's nowt so queer as folk." He endured to the end, was hanged and quartered, and boiled in tar. I have seen his skull. It is in "the house of the skull," another of our old halls, which, perhaps, I may see again and write about. As to the ghosts of Barlow it is better to be silent.

"On Sondaye," the 26th May, 1644, that is in less than three years from this tragedy, Prince Rupert and his army encamped on "Barloe More" on their rush to succour Bolton and Lathom House, and it is most likely the Prince and his officers would rest in Barlow Hall, for the Barlows would be sure to be on the King's side, though that shifty King had let their brother die. In 1620 all the family had acknowledged to be recusants and continued to baptize their children at Didsbury.

In the next century, when Prince Charles Edward came to Manchester in the famous '45, Lord Elcho and his cavalry went south by the Barlow Ford, an old ford

BARLOW HALL

of the Mersey near to Barlow Hall. The main army built and crossed by the first bridge over the Mersey between Didsbury and Cheadle. The Barlows seem to have again got into trouble over the Stuart cause. In fact their troubles and persecutions thickened. In 1734 I find mention of a dispute about "the consecrated goods or ornaments in the Popish chapel at Barlow." In 1785, at the Bull's Head, in Manchester, the Manor or Lordship of Barlow, with the hall, &c., was offered for sale at auction. Samuel Egerton of Tatton, who bought it, was the sole acting executor of the last Barlow of Barlow, a family who had held the estate for five hundred years. Its recent rise in value, the unearned increment, should exceed the wildest dreams of avarice.

On the 10th September 1893, the anniversary of the martyrdom, a throng of genuine Catholic pilgrims visited the hall. Its last bit of notoriety has arisen from its having been the Manchester home of Sir William Cunliffe Brooks, a thorough Lancashire man, some of whose relatives tried to prove that he was a Scotchman after he was safely dead.

At the sale of his furniture and goods at Barlow Hall there was a lot of twenty-two stall-ends with handsomely carved heads, made from old English oak nearly three inches thick. X bought them unseen, gave them to me, and now they are round the little entrance-hall and stairs of my home. I try to "make-believe" they have some connection with what was once the Barlow Chapel in the old church across the garden from where I now write. They make the staircase narrower, and the cheerful remark of X when he saw them there was: "How will they get your coffin down? They will have to up-end you."

There is some old oak in this house, but it has been mostly hidden, cased or plastered over and whitewashed.

When I wanted more to match these stall-ends it was impossible to get any old English oak. There was plenty of foreign and some new, but for the genuine article we had to saw up old beams that I had saved from the clerk's house. When the work was finished I was told of two farmhouses that were to be pulled down immediately. One was called The Broad Oak. It was about half-a-mile off, near to the river Mersey, where once there was a ferry. A new branch railway was passing over the site and the house must be cleared away at once. I bought a dozen good sound oak beams, about twelve to fifteen feet in length and perhaps two hundred years old, for twenty-five shillings.

I had also had a fancy to have oaken balusters of two spirals winding round one another but not touching each other, something like the ancient carvings. It proved quite impossible to get these of English make, unless at the prohibitive price of £2 each; but in America they could be made for a dollar, because there they use machinery.

It seems to me that anything in old English oak must advance enormously in value, for the supply will fail and there is no wood exactly like it. We see it in country places in profusion and wasted, but you cannot buy any. Every old house even in Didsbury was built of oak, and some of them are worth pulling down for the sake of it. There will soon be very few left. I was once in a thatched cottage talking to a neighbour of old times, and remarked that he had some nice old furniture. "Aye," he said, "but th' best cheers are in th' bedroom, they were th' Mosley's cheers, Lords o' th' manor. They come out o' what's now the Wesleyan college, my wife's fayther had 'em, but I dun know what we keepen 'em for." He brought me one down, and said that I could have them for "hafe a suvrin each." We already had a fine mahogany wardrobe, four-post bedstead, and chest

of drawers, bought at the same sale nearly a century ago, when the new hall was being converted into a ladies' boarding-school. It was subsequently bought by the Wesleyan Methodists for a training college for ministers.

I sent for the chairs and here is a photograph of one. A cabinetmaker lately told me that some like it had sold at Lord Wilton's sale at Heaton Hall for £20 each. He thought that an excessive price, but he would not mind giving £7 each.

A CHAIR THAT HAS BEEN IN DIDSBURY FOR MORE THAN A HUNDRED YEARS

# ABNEY HALL

THE last home to have its record in this book is the home of X. It is not very old, but as X has lived there for more than fifty years, perhaps it is old enough to qualify. In these hurrying march-of-intellect days there are not many men who live fifty years in one house. They flit, or get wed, or richer, or poorer, or go hence, or something happens to them long before the snows of fifty winters have whitened them. A cottage by my gate has only had two tenants in one hundred years, but it is close to the churchyard, where they get used to long tenancies. The last tenant, after being a bellringer for nearly seventy years, dug his own grave in the gravel of the cellar, under his hand-loom, quite shocking the parson. When he had to drink water he preferred it from the Holy Well, which probably filters from the graves and has some body in it. As X is very careful of what he drinks it may be hoped he will attain to the ninety-two years of his grandfather, John Watts, who with generations of his forefathers is buried in this churchyard of Didsbury.

Abney Hall was originally planned on a magnificent scale, by or for one who like many others was not able to finish. Folklorists know full well how those who build fine houses quickly end their days. In this one a corner was hurriedly made ready so that the owner might die in peace. In olden times the proverb grew, "Fools build houses, wise men live in them;" but our modern jerry-builders are reversing that, they wax fat, and softly say among themselves, "We build houses, fools live in them."

When Abney Hall, with its deeply sculptured stone and massive oak, was lying derelict, X's father bought it

ABNEY HALL

and finished it with all its details of furniture, gardens, and stables, in the sumptuous style already planned by artists in their work. During the Art Treasures Exhibition in 1857, when Sir James Watts was Mayor of Manchester, and again, in 1871, when he was High Sheriff of the County of Lancaster, the hospitality of Abney was renowned. Here came all the prominent men of the day, irrespective of their politics or religion. Even Bishops pocketed their aversion to Dissenters and deigned to smile. The great rivals, Gladstone and Disraeli (at different times), brought their respective wives and stayed. Bright and Cobden, leaders of the people in their day and generation; Lord Brougham (aged 92), who had three sets of teeth, one for eating, one for sleeping, and one for talking—swore at everything and everybody; the Duke of Argyll, the Earl of Derby, Lord John Russell, Earl Granville, Monckton Milnes, Ed. Miall, W. E. Forster, and many others. At a dinner given to the Bar there were four future judges present, Lord Russell of Killowen and Lord Herschel being in company.

The greatest entertainment for the greatest number was when Prince Albert and his suite of dukes and earls stayed for some days, and the Life Guards guarded the gates, to the intense admiration of all the awe-struck lads for miles around. One of Sir James's pet tales with a moral in it was to point to a motto on the ceiling of the library, "Seest thou a man diligent in his business, he shall stand before kings," and say the nearest approach to it he knew was that he had several times sat and chatted under that motto with Prince Albert.

All round the cornices and compartments in the ceilings of the State rooms are elaborately painted mottoes —easy ones for the entertaining rooms, but Latin for the dining-room, so that any bored diner lacking in conversation may ask his or her neighbour if they could help them with a translation. Memories are short nowadays—the answer generally is, "I have really quite forgotten all my Latin."

DINING-ROOM, ABNEY HALL

TERRACE ROOM, ABNEY HALL

Some of the three hundred oil-paintings are historical and interesting. On the next page is a photograph of Holbein's Sir Anthony Browne, in a carved frame, with his coat of arms, pedigree, &c., on the panel. This picture came from Hengrave in Suffolk. Sir Anthony was Master of the Horse to Henry the Eighth, and as his proxy, married Ann of Cleves, who was so ugly that when Henry saw her he used bad language, and said Anthony could keep her. On page 397 is Cromwell dictating to Milton, well known from its numerous engravings. There are also pictures by Gainsborough, Ansdell, Kneller, Romney, Sant, Phillip, and many others.

For any one who may be interested in chairs there is an extraordinary collection, for in addition to sixty-six old oak chairs, most of them carved, some of them dated, there are chairs of all ages, styles, and varied woods; some of them with a little history. The rush-bottomed ones of Sam Crompton, the inventor of the machine known as "the mule," which revolutionised cotton-spinning, making fortunes for others but trouble for the inventor, came from Hall-i'-th'-Wood, his home near Bolton; the hard-bottomed ones of Cardinal Manning and John Wesley; the chairs of Dr. Isaac Watts, Thackeray, Lord Byron, Liversege, and others, among them being four carved ones and a gate table all in oak, formerly used by Southey the poet.

A score of big oaken tables have come from the halls and farms all over Cheshire. The last arrival had its top of heavy worn planks all loose, while on its framework underneath is roughly carved "HIT—IVLY 20—1672. John Chadwick of Godley did maed this table." Another one, dated 1677, was in Hollingworth Hall, Mottram, for two centuries, with chairs to match.

The reader may think I am cataloguing a museum if I mention a tithe of the curiosities in carved work, armour, ancient furniture, &c., &c., which crowd the walls at Abney. Of cabinets, chests, coffers, cupboards, or dressers, there are more than fifty. Some of them

RELICS OF THE GREAT FAMILIES OF SMITH AND BROWN

are dated with names or initials on them, most of the dates being of the seventeenth century. A few of them are photographed in this book. Of the three fine oak bedsteads, the one on page 398 came from Tamworth Castle. On the head is the motto "Esto semper Fidelis" (Be thou always faithful), and at the foot is "Feare God and Honor the Queene, 1559." Any one could read the latter, so there would be no excuse for disobedience; but perhaps the former was mercifully put in Latin, so that erring sinners might not be reproached.

The grandfathers' clocks are very numerous, for Bailey, the late steward of the manor, who lived in his thatched house on Gatley Green, and told me such wonderful tales of the folk and the folklore recorded in the Chronicles of Cheadle and Gatley, was partly a clockmaker by profession as well as a cobbler. Gatley, being at the borders of two counties, in three or four parishes, and near a river, was always a lawless place, and convenient for resurrectionists, who could often make more of a dead man than ever he was worth when alive.

Sometimes they were fortunate enough to get a good oak coffin, which, if not used again, would make a grand clock case, for burial in the ground for a few years mellows and darkens the oak. Why it was customary to put the maker's name on clocks but not the date, I do not know. The houses and furniture of the seventeenth century are often dated.

Among instruments of music there are a harpsichord, a spinet, and many fiddles, one of the last being marked Antonius Stradivarius, 1721.

The cap which Oliver Cromwell wore when he was a baby has finely embroidered, "Sweet bab don't cry, 1599." This was bought from a descendant of the Protector. St. Oliver being patron saint of the late knight. Some very costly jewelled candelabra from the sack of the Tuileries in 1848 are worth noting. For those who have a craze for china there are figures, jugs, vases, &c. &c., of Crown Derby, Delft, Sèvres, Dresden, Chelsea,

CROMWELL AND MILTON, GRAND STAIRCASE, ABNEY HALL

ANCIENT BEDSTEAD, ABNEY HALL

Nankin, Rockingham, Wedgwood, Worcester, and many other names, Oriental and Italian, that neither of us knows how to spell, and much study is a weariness of the flesh.

As a fitting conclusion to this book on Old Homes, let me record where an old home, or what was left of

A RESTORED REMNANT OF BUCKLEY HALL

one, was bodily transported and set up again merely as a memento of the past.

The maiden name of X's mother was Buckley. The Buckleys were an old family with a small estate at Buckley Hall, near Rochdale, on the hills by the border of

Yorkshire. It is possible they were distantly connected with the Bulkeleys of Cheadle Bulkeley, an ancient manor of which Abney is now the hall. The old stone house named Buckley Hall was being demolished a few years since when X heard of it. He at once went to see it, bought what was left or could be got, numbered the stones, preserved the oaken beams, and set it up on one of the garden lawns, an original gable, with a large hall or barn behind, which is now filled with old oaken furniture, and where crowds are fed on festive occasions without turning them loose among the other treasures.

When time, who steals our years away,
  Shall steal our pleasures too;
The mem'ry of the past will stay
  And half our joys renew.

# Index


Abbey Dore, 133, 344
Abney Hall, 389–400
Aconbury Hill, 200, 325, 338
Acton Burnell, 330, 356
Alberbury, 306
Albright Hussey, 89, 90
Alcock, Peter and Charlotte, 4
Alderley, 1–16, 201, 202, 232
Alice Fitzwarren, 54
Almshouses, 143, 151
Alttyrynys, 177, 178
Apples, 140
Arley Hall, 287–300
Arrow, the river, 165
Ashbourne, 52, 365
Ashley Church, 28
Ashley Parsonage, 25
Astbury, 202–204, 212
Aston, John, 100
Audlem, 17, 18

Barlow Hall, 378–386
Baron Grelle, 342–344, 350
Barratt, 230
Barthomley Massacre, 376
Battlefield Church, 90
Beeston Castle, 24, 223, 377
Beresford, 46, 365
Black Mountains, the, 178
Blore Heath, 21–23, 30
Blount, 160, 265
Bosbury, 166–168, 173
Breidden Hills, 280, 286
Brereton, Sir Wm., 206, 210
Brereton Arms, 354, 355
Brockton, near Wenlock, 356
Broughton Hall, 27–30
Buckley Hall, 399, 400
Buerton Hall, 20
Bull, "Ancient Briton," 112–114
Burnt Woods, the, 30
Buttington, 281–284

Caersws, 259, 264
Canadian geese, 6, 88
Caractacus, 23, 280
Carden, 372–377
Caus Castle, 301–305
Cecils, the, 178, 265
Chained books, 256
Chairs, 388, 394
Chaucer, 100, 363
Cheshire Round, the, 4.
Chetham Hospital and Library, 339–353
Chetham, Humfrey, 342–348, 350
Chicago, 112, 192
China, old, 396
Chirbury, 239, 242, 247, 255–257
Chirk, 72
Chorley, 1, 2
Churnett, the, 228
Cider, 88, 128–130, 137, 165
Clifford Castle, on the Wye, 126–129
Clive, Lord, 23
Clockhouse, the, 9, 10

Cockfighting, 20, 244–246
Combermere Abbey, 24
Comus, 104–108, 116
Corbets, the, 90, 96, 102, 304, 362
Corvedale, 356
Corwen, 88
Craven Arms, 363
Cromwell, Oliver, 80–82, 396
Crown Inn, Bosbury, 168
Cuckoo, young, 370

Danes, slaughter of the, 281, 282
Derby, Earls of, 346
Derbyshire, 44–53, 365–371
Derwas, 278
Didsbury, 50, 110, 120, 136, 140, 182, 256, 268, 288, 322, 332, 350, 358, 378–389
Dick Whittington, 54–61
Dieulacres Abbey, 221–227
Dinmore Hill, 150
Domesday Survey, 34, 66, 342
Dormington Court, 174–176
Dorstone, 130–132
Dudley, Earl of Leicester, 264–269

Eardisland, 164–169
Eccleshall, 34, 39
Education, 363
Edward the Confessor, 104, 352–353
Elks family, 99
Ellesmere, 58, 71, 89
Essex, Earl of, 265
Ewyas, 134, 178, 182

Fair Rosamund, 126
Father Ambrose, 384
Father Harcourt, 322
Fenny Bentley, 365–366
Fitzherberts, 34, 52, 368–370
Fitzwarren, 54, 58, 60
Fletcher, 32
Font at Condover, 323
Frome Valley, 176

Gadarene swine, the, 328
Gamefowl, 172–175
Garway, 184–187
Gerald, Earl of Pembroke, 70, 83
Gerards, 28, 286
Gittins, 100
Gladstone and Disraeli, 391
Glastonbury Thorn, 10
Golden Valley, the, 133
Goodrich Castle, 194–198
Gough, Richard, 94–100
Grinshill, 102
Grosmont, 182

Halston, 62–69
Hanging Ditch, 238, 340
Harry of Monmouth, 193
Hartington, 45
Hawkstone, 23
Herbert, Lord, 245, 254, 257
Herberts, the, 246, 256, 257
Hereford, 118, 142–150, 163, 187, 200. 325, 337–338
Hereford cattle, 66, 108–116, 238
Heronry at Halston, 66–68
High Leigh, 290–293
Hills of Hawkstone, 23
Home of Rest, Coningsby, 143–147, 163–165
Hussey, 90
Hyde Hall, Denton, 309

India, the conqueror of, 23

Jack Mytton, 62–69
Jenny Pipes, 151
Jukes family, 98

Kenric, David, 28
Kentchurch Court, 184
Kilpeck, 134

Kinder Scout, 48–50
King Alfred, 282, 342
King Arthur, 193
King Edward, 118, 342, 346
King Henry, 70, 126
King Henry V., 182, 193, 333
King Henry VIII., 151, 226, 264, 394
King John, 60, 236, 342
King Richard III., 13, 118, 210
King Roderic of Wales, 78
Kinnersley, 28
Kites, 6
Knights Hospitallers, 68, 143, 156
Knights Templars, 184

Leches of Carden, 372–374
Ledbury, 137–139
Leek, 221, 226
Leghs, the, 292
Leinthall, 109–116, 176
Lely, Sir Peter, 80, 332, 336
Lens to camera, 337
Leominster, 150, 164, 167
Ley, the, Weobley, 121–124
Lilies, Madonna, 86, 360
Lindow Moss, 230–232
Llangollen, 73, 84
Llanthony Abbey, 177–183
Llanvihangel-Crucarney Court, 182, 185
Llewelyn, 60, 80, 84, 236
Lloyd, 239, 242–246, 262
Llwyn, 274–276
Loggerheads, the, 28, 30
Lord Gerard, 28
Lord La Warre, 344
Lord Mayor of London, 55–56, 61
Lovekyn, 362
Ludford, 156
Ludlow, 104–108, 152–157
Lymore, 247–255

Maesmawr, 269–271
Malbon's Diary of Civil War, 374–377
Manchester, 128, 339–353, 364
Marche Manor, 305–307
Market Drayton, 23, 30
Market Hall, the, Lemster, 164–167
Marrington Hall, 239–244
Martyr, Barlow, the 384
Massey, 18
Matthew Paris's Chronicle, 352
Mayes, 37, 342
Mees Hall, 32–37
Mersey, the, 224, 288, 380, 386–387
Millmeece, 34. 37, 40
Milton, 106, 108, 116, 308
Minsterley, 301–303
Moat Lane, 258, 271
Mogg Forest, 363
Monmouth, 191–193, 325, 332
Montgomery Castle, 234–239, 245, 256
Moreton Corbet, 101–103, 376
Moreton Old Hall, 201–220
Morf Forest, 362
Mortimer's Cross, 118
Moss Family, 34–39
Moss Hall, 17, 19
Mow Cop, 202, 218
Much Marcle, 137–140
Mucklestone Wood, 17–26
Munsley, 170
Myddle, 92–100
Mytton or Mutton, 62–69, 362

Nell Gwyn, 163
Nesta, 70–83
Norbury in Derbyshire, 365–371
Nunnerley, 20

Oak, 162, 168, 176, 212–216, 250–254, 266–268, 273, 311, 322, 386, 387, 394–396
Offa's Dyke, 71, 118, 239, 247, 286

Oliver Cromwell, 80–82, 396
Orleton Court, 159–162
Ottley, Sir Francis, 317
Owen, 98
Owen Cadogan, 70, 82
Owen Glyndwr, 88, 182, 184
Owen Tudor, 118

Park, 264–268
Parkes, 96
Parr, old, 306–309
Penarth, 271, 272
Penrhos Hall, 274–280
Peterchurch, 132
Pigs, 53, 328
Pichford of Pichford's Effigy, 310–314
Pitchford Hall, 310–324
Plas Uchaf Eglwyseg, 70–84
Polypody Fern, 324, 361
Poolquay, 280
Powysland, 71, 238, 250, 258–286, 302
Preston Court, 140–142
Preston Gubbals, 92
Prince Albert, 391
Prince Rupert, 137, 168, 257, 318

Quakers, the, 246
Queen Eleanor, 126
Queen Elizabeth, 264–267
Queen Margaret, 21
Queen Victoria, 318

Raffald, Mrs., 298
Randle, Earl, 222–224
Ranters, the, 158
Ranton Abbey, 34, 38
Reader's House, the, Ludlow, 154
Rector Kinaston, 94
Red-Coat Hospital, 143–147, 163–165
Reedsmere, 201
Reve, 96, 99
Rhyd Spence, 128, 131
Rhyd-y-Carw, 259–262
Rhyming-Squire, the, 298
Richards Castle, 158, 160
Rode of Rode, 210
Roderic, King of Wales, 78
Rosamund Fair, 126
Ross on Wye, 200, 333, 338

St. Bartholomew's Priory, 58
St. Giles, 46, 156–157
St. Oswald, 350
St. Weonards, 328
Saltersley, 229–232
Scudamore, 114, 134, 184
Severn, the, 280, 286
Shakspere, 89, 118, 193, 210, 316
Shipton Hall, 356–363
Shrewsbury, 64, 89, 234, 255, 286, 301, 311, 316, 356, 374
Siddington, 202
Sioux City, 114, 192
Stake House, 166–171
Standon, 30, 32, 36, 40, 80, 172
Stanley, 1, 2, 6, 13, 294, 346
Stiperstones, the, 302
Stoke Edith, 142
Styal, 228
Sundial, 90, 242, 333
Swynnerton, 40–43
Sydney, 192

Tables, 394
Talgarth, 262
Tintern Abbey, 188–192
Tissington, 48–52, 365
Titus Oates, 332
Tomkins Family, 114, 122
Treago, 186, 325–333
Trederwen, 280
Trewern, 283–286

Tudge, W., 108, 116
Tummusing, 37
Tyler, 100

Uriconium, 23

Valle Crucis, 86
Vaughan, 239, 245
Vern, the, 170

Walton, Izaak, 46, 256
Warburton, 287–290
Wareing, 96
Warin or Warren, 58, 60
Wasps, 128, 130
Watts Family, 389, 396, 400
Wenlock Edge, 356
Weobley, 114–125
Whittington, 54–61
Wigmore, 116
William, the Conqueror, 34, 234, 287
Wilton Bridge, 200, 333
Wizard, the, 10, 232
Wollaston, 306
Wolves, 41, 304
Woodpeckers, 158
Woore, 20
World's End, the, 70–84
Wormelow Tump, 325
Wrekin, the, 22, 324
Wye, the, 126, 130, 189, 198
Wythall, 198, 333–337

Yankees, 112–114, 189, 192
Yews, 90, 218, 278, 298–299
York and Lancaster, wars of, 23, 31, 89, 118

THE END

Printed by Ballantyne, Hanson & Co.
Edinburgh & London

*Other Books by the same Author*

## A History of Didsbury

***The Manchester Guardian***

"If there be such a thing as the genius of the place, Mr. Moss is probably better entitled than any one else to be considered its incarnation. . . . Touches of homely and pungent humour expressed in racy vernacular."

***The Cheshire County News***

". . . Intensely attractive. Full of interest to the lover of local lore and the England of long ago."

## Didisburye in the '45

## A History of Cheadle and Gatley

## Folk-Lore, Old Customs, and Tales

***Notes and Queries***

"Mr. Moss's book we unhesitatingly commend to our readers. It will be useful to some and agreeable to all."

***The Manchester Courier***

"The chief charm of this book is that it supplies in a handsome form a record of old people, old places, and old customs, compiled with equal skill and sympathy. Only a true lover of his neighbours and of his country could have entered so truly into the joys and sorrows of rural life, and only a true literary artist could have given the themes their proper setting."

## Pilgrimages in Cheshire and Shropshire

---

**Copies of "Didsbury," price 6s., and of "Folk-Lore," 10s. 6d., can be had from FLETCHER MOSS, DIDSBURY. There are none left of the others. Copies of "Pilgrimages" have been sold at three or four times the original price. "Folk-Lore, Old Customs, and Tales," is probably the best.**